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# **THE USE OF VIDEO-BASED FEEDBACK IN ELITE SPORT: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF PRACTICE**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements of the Manchester  
Metropolitan University for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Exercise and Sport Science

MMU Cheshire

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## **Abstract**

The use of video-based performance analysis has increased within multidisciplinary sports science support teams, but there remains a lack of research to underpin pedagogical practices. This thesis adopted an 18-month interpretive ethnographic approach, as part of a longitudinal case study with an elite Paralympic team, to better understand how video-based feedback sessions are delivered by coaches and interpreted by athletes. Data for this study was collected by using participant observations to explore the behaviours and interactions that occurred before, during and after video-based feedback sessions.

Following an initial period of participant observation, interviews were conducted with the Head Coach (Greg) and Assistant Coach (Barry) to understand the aim of the video-based feedback work with the team (2.5 hours). Additionally, multiple video-based feedback sessions were audio recorded (20 hours) from training sessions and competitions prior to the Rio Paralympics. During the Games, pre- and post-match team briefings were audio recorded (6.5 hours), and afterwards, debriefing sessions and preparation for future competitions (6.5 hours) were also audio recorded. Following the Paralympics, Greg and Barry, five athletes and the Sports Psychologist (Sam) shared their thoughts and feelings within in-depth, one-to-one interviews regarding the use of video-based feedback (12 hours). This data, along with detailed field notes, were then subjected to a narrative analysis to identify key patterns and characteristics. The narratives were analysed drawing upon concepts from Goffman's (1959) interactionist understanding of the presentation of self in everyday life, as a novel theoretical lens to understand the preparation undertaken for video-based feedback sessions.

Findings revealed that the coaching team prepare for their 'frontstage' performances in a 'backstage' environment and they work together in a 'performance team' which keep 'secrets' from others. However, the 'frontstage' performance does not always go according to plan because individuals can adopt 'discrepant roles' that are not compatible with the 'image' they are trying to portray. Consequently, this thesis has contributed to the understanding of video-based feedback sessions by adopting novel methodological and theoretical approaches and further develops the existing performance analysis and sports coaching literature.

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## **Chapter 1 – Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

The use of video-based performance analysis by professional teams and athletes has increased over the past decade and is now regarded as an integral part of the coaching process (Carling, Williams & Reilly, 2005; Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011; Hughes, 2008a, 2008b; Nelson, Potrac & Groom, 2014). For example, Nelson et al. (2014) suggested that there are multiple benefits for the use of video-based technology, including underpinning training and rehabilitation, identifying strengths and weaknesses of opposition and reflecting on performance post-match. However, the use of video-based performance analysis to facilitate athlete learning is far from a simple input-output process (Morgan, 2008). For example, the sporting culture, coaching philosophy and the recipient's qualities need to be considered within the delivery of video-based feedback (Groom et al., 2011; Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2012; Nelson et al., 2014). Despite suggestions from Groom and Cushion (2004, 2005) and Groom et al. (2011) that the learning processes that both the coaches and players engage in have significant interest, "little research has investigated performance analysis from a learning perspective" (Mackenzie & Cushion, 2013, p. 656). Therefore, it is important for coaches and performance analysts to understand each athlete as an individual. The interactions between coaches and athletes has been highlighted to be affected by a number of complex interacting social factors such as coaching knowledge, social power and mutual respect (Groom et al., 2012). Previous work has highlighted the complex, social, cultural and political nature of sports coaching (e.g. d'Arripe-Longuville, Fournier & Dubois, 1998; Cushion & Jones, 2006, 2014; Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2003; Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b; Potrac, Jones & Armour, 2002; Purdy, Potrac & Jones, 2008); as well as similar political and micro-

political issues within the performance analysis environment (Booroff, Nelson & Potrac, 2016; Huggan, Nelson & Potrac, 2014).

Whilst the use of video-based performance analysis has increased within multidisciplinary sports science support teams, there still remains a lack of research to underpin the pedagogical practices of analysts, coaches and scientists to assist them with incorporating video-based technology within their coaching practice (Stratton, Reilly, Williams & Richardson, 2004). Much of the previous performance analysis literature has focused upon discussing technological issues, system design, validity and reliability of data and performance indicators (Hughes, 2008a; Hughes & Franks, 1997, 2004; O'Donoghue, 2010). More recently, it was suggested by Mackenzie and Cushion (2013) that the effectiveness and delivery of performance analysis has been under-researched, apart from the work by Groom et al. (2011), therefore, little is known about the impact it has on athlete learning and performance. The methodological process that is used too frequently within performance analysis has been "positivist and key performance indicator driven research that has focused on attempting to predict successful future performance" (Mackenzie & Cushion, 2013, p. 657). In order to broaden the usefulness of applied performance analysis research, researchers should consider cultural and social influences along with the learning experiences of the participants when giving or receiving performance analysis (Groom et al., 2011; Mackenzie & Cushion, 2013).

Whilst the work by both Groom et al. (2011) and Nelson et al. (2014) has provided initial insights into the coaching practices of video-based feedback sessions, as well as the experiences of a player receiving video-based feedback, much of this insight has been based upon "retrospective interview data" (Groom et al., 2012, p. 440). Therefore, this approach only provides one empirical perspective towards understanding the pedagogical use of video-based feedback within the coaching process. Importantly, more work is required to

further investigate the delivery of video-based process 'in situ' (Groom et al., 2012). An exception to the use of retrospective interviews, is the work of Groom et al. (2012), who utilised a conversation analysis approach to explore coach-athlete 'talking-in-action'. These concepts provided a novel theoretical understanding of coach-athlete interactions in coaching context (i.e. turn taking patterns, interruptions, unequal opportunities to talk, and the use of questioning to reinforce social power), rather than solely providing, a description of verbal content (Groom et al., 2012; Jones, 2009). This work has assisted in our understanding of the importance of not just 'what is said' but also 'how it is said', within the video feedback room.

Huggan et al. (2014) carried out an investigation, using a narrative form of inquiry, from an interpretivist view, to highlight the understanding of the micropolitical nature of sports organisations, with particular focus on the role of a performance analyst. This work extended the traditional focus of the technical aspects of performance analysis within current literature, with little insights into the working life of performance analysts and the various individuals they have to work alongside, who may, at times, have opposing views, beliefs and goals (Huggan et al., 2014; Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b; Thompson, Potrac & Jones, 2013). Furthermore, Huggan et al. (2014, p. 2) explained that "we also possess little knowledge of the affecting and emotional nature of their [performance analysts] working lives". Whilst the research mainly focuses upon the micropolitics of being a performance analyst, it still begins to provide an insight into the life of a performance analyst within professional soccer, which is an area that has received little attention within literature (Huggan et al., 2014). Furthermore, it provides an insight into the working relationships that a performance analyst has within sport, as well as who they interact with, and how they feel that people within the organisation perceive them.

Similarly, when considering the working life of performance analysts, Wright, Carling and Collins (2014) have suggested that it is important that the analysts are integrated with the rest of the coaching team. Wright et al. (2014) further explain that localised analytics can result in insightful analysis and interpretation of data and performance impact, whereas when analysts are not integrated into the coaching team information may not be received by other members of the staff (i.e. staff working in isolation). However, depending upon how the sporting organisation values the importance of performance analysis could potentially influence the interactions available to the analyst and the levels of support they receive (Wright, Atkins & Jones, 2012; Wright et al., 2014). There is still a lack of understanding surrounding “how the relationship and dynamic process in place between the coach and analyst allows effective analysis to be produced” (Wright et al., 2014, p. 725).

Wright et al. (2014) suggest that performance analysis could be a key component of athlete development and self-analysis, but it remains unknown how individual coaches approach performance analysis feedback, and there remains variability between what different coaches expect to get out of each feedback session. Whilst feedback can assist learning, it also has limitations that coaches and analysts should be aware of (Vickers, 2011; Wright et al., 2014). For example, Hodges and Franks (2008) suggested that athletes can become too reliant upon feedback and they are then unable to detect errors and consequently correct errors for themselves. However, it remains unknown whether coaches and analysts are aware of these limitations and complexities when delivering feedback and these issues may influence whether feedback is or is not implemented by the analysts and coaches in certain situations (Wright et al., 2014).

Despite the increasing body of sports performance analysis research, there remains a lack of understanding concerning how information is shared between the individuals involved within the process (Wright et al., 2014). By carrying out case study-based research,

insights might be provided concerning how performance analysis is used in various applied contexts (Mackenzie & Cushion, 2013; Nelson et al., 2014; Wright et al., 2014). Furthermore, by focusing upon an interpretive qualitative approach, our knowledge surrounding the effective use of performance analysis might be enhanced, which could potentially provide pedagogical underpinning to the effectiveness of how performance analysis is implemented within elite sporting environment (Mackenzie & Cushion, 2013; Wright et al., 2014).

A suggestion for future studies by Groom et al. (2012) was the consideration of coaches' beliefs concerning athlete learning, and how this affects their coaching behaviour, particularly when utilising video-based feedback. In order to understand learning in video-based performance analysis environments, research needs to further consider the social complexities and inter-dependencies of practice (Cushion et al., 2010; Mackenzie & Cushion, 2013). This includes the athletes, and coaches, and the social world they inhabit and internalise (Mackenzie & Cushion, 2013).

## **1.2 Research problem**

Underpinned by the need for empirical evidence-based practice in elite sport, the research problem was set to address two significant issues. Firstly, there was an applied need from the English Institute of Sport (EIS) to better understand the use of video-based feedback. This included the ways in which video-based feedback sessions are prepared, delivered, and reviewed by coaching practitioners. Importantly, from an applied perspective, the impact of preparation, delivery and post meeting review needs to be examined from the perspective of both the coach (deliverer) and athlete (recipient).

Secondly, an analysis of the academic literature demonstrated that there is a clear empirical, methodological and theoretical gap within the existing literature to guide our

understanding of video-based feedback practice. This is important because the advancements in video-based computer technology have not been mirrored in our pedagogical understanding of the use of technology in practice (Bartlett, 2001; Groom et al., 2011; James, 2006; Mackenzie & Cushion, 2013; Stratton et al., 2004). Therefore, this research aims to address both: (1) the applied need for an empirically based approach to underpin elite sports coaching practice for the EIS, examining how video-based feedback sessions are delivered within an elite setting, and (2) further advance our understanding of the delivery of video-based performance analysis from an empirical, methodological and theoretical perspective.

### **1.3 Research questions**

1. How did coaches prepare for video-based performance analysis feedback sessions?
  - a. What did coaches consider when preparing sessions?
  - b. Why did coaches prepare sessions this way?
2. How did coaches and athletes interact during video-based performance analysis feedback sessions?
  - a. What issues influenced coaches' and athletes' interactions?
  - b. Why did these issues influence coaches' and athletes' interactions this way?
3. How did coaches and athletes evaluate video-based performance analysis feedback sessions?
  - a. What issues influenced coaches' and athletes' evaluation?
  - b. Why did these issues influence coaches' and athletes' evaluation?

## **1.4 Organisation of thesis**

Chapter 1 is an introduction to the topic by providing background information, the research problem and the research questions that will be answered in the thesis. Following this will be a Review of the Literature, Chapter 2, which critically considers previous performance analysis and video-based feedback literature within the coaching process. Also in this chapter, the theoretical limitations of previous work and the approaches used to understand interactions will be considered and then discuss how this area can be furthered by perhaps utilising previously unused theoretical concepts. The Methodology, Chapter 3, follows next and outlines how the methods were selected and why this was the most suitable method to pick from the options available. After this comes the Findings, Chapter 4, which provides a selection of narratives from my time working with an elite sports team as the performance analyst. These narratives will combine my ethnographic accounts and the coach/player interviews, to provide rich data that will examine the research questions outlined in Chapter 1. Furthermore, the Findings will provide an understanding of how the interactions occur during video-based feedback sessions. Within Chapter 5, the findings shall then be discussed by utilising a theoretical interpretation. Finally, Chapter 6 will conclude the work and highlight how the findings can aid the field of performance analysis and video-based feedback to move forwards. Additionally, any limitations within the work shall be considered, as well as the implications for other coaches and performance analysts when providing video-based feedback, before suggesting some areas for future research investigations.

## **Chapter 2 – Review of Literature**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to outline how performance analysis has been utilised within the coaching process, and to highlight the empirical and theoretical limitations of earlier work. To achieve this, the review provides a detailed analysis of previous theoretical approaches to understanding social interactions in sport. In addition, the significant theoretical contribution made by Erving Goffman in the sporting literature will be outlined. By undertaking this comprehensive review of how Goffman's theories have been utilised, several gaps in our understanding are illustrated. The chapter concludes by suggesting the adoption of some of these novel theoretical concepts within sports coaching literature, as a means to gaining new empirical and theoretical insights to understand how coaches interact with players and other members of staff in the coaching process.



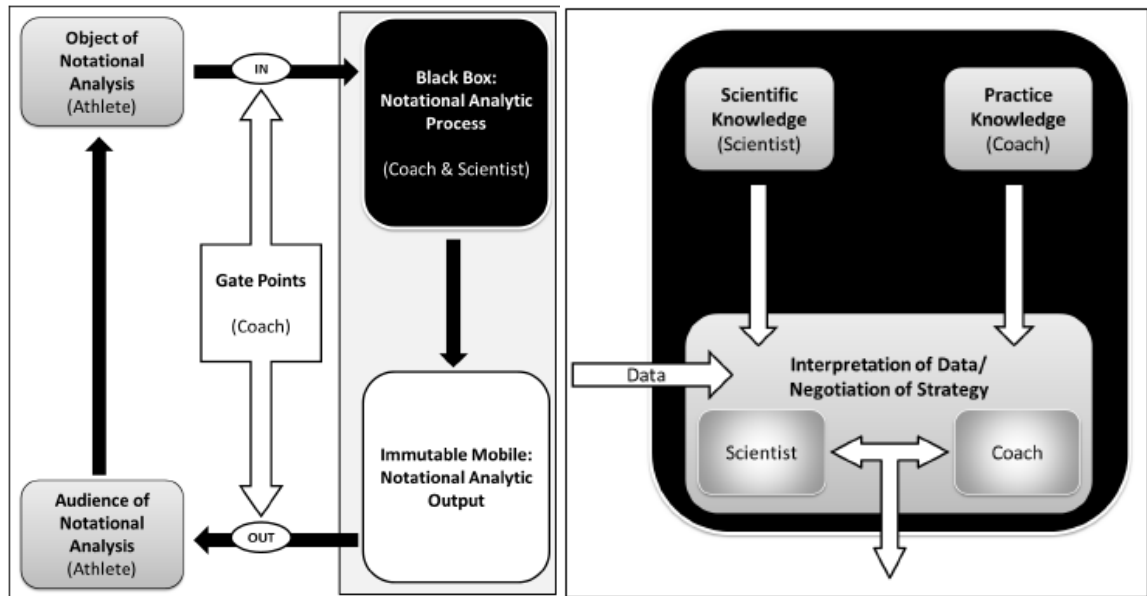
## **2.2 Findings of performance analysis literature**

Until recently, academic work concerning performance analysis had a tendency to focus upon the identification of movement and performance patterns (see Hughes & Franks, 2005; Tenga, Holme, Ronglan, & Bahr, 2010a, 2010b), the identification of key performance indicators (see James, Mellalieu, & Jones, 2005; Jones, James, & Mellalieu, 2008), the measurement of physiological work rate profiles (see Carling, Bloomfield, Nelson & Reilly, 2008; Strudwick & Reilly, 2001), constructing notational analysis systems and the importance of ensuring reliability within the data (see Carling et al., 2005; Hughes & Franks, 2004; Liebermann et al., 2002; Wilson, 2008). Additionally, the work of James (2006) discussed the use of notational analysis in soccer, the previous research conducted and future implications for the discipline. Such work is underpinned by a (post)positive research paradigm, which attempts to “gain a better understanding of reality” and get “as close as possible to truth through the use of statistics that explains and describes what is known as reality” (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011, p. 111).

However, there has since been a shift in focus to try and understand how performance analysis is applied in an elite sport environment by investigating the engagement levels and perspectives of players, coaches and analysts (see Bampouras, Cronin & Miller, 2012; Francis & Jones, 2014; Wright et al., 2012, 2014; Wright, Carling, Lawlor & Collins, 2016). This work follows a “constructivist and interpretivist view” (Wright et al., 2016, p. 1009), which attempts to “construct knowledge through our lived experiences and through our interactions with other members of society” (Lincoln et al., 2011, p. 103).

Bampouras et al. (2012, p. 469) interviewed a sport scientist, a coach and a former professional athlete with the aim of generating “an exploratory analysis of in-practice application of performance analysis”. The participants were selected from differing sports as

the authors thought the emerging data would then relate to the broad use of performance analysis rather than focusing on an individual sport (Bampouras et al., 2012). Furthermore, each of the interviews with the participants was carried out by a different member of the research team with the aim of reducing potential error and bias that can occur when a single investigator conducts every interview (Bampouras et al., 2012; Patton, 1990). However, a participant is likely to give different replies to different interviewers based upon their relationship to them and how at ease they feel while being questioned (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Another factor that could influence the participant's replies during an interview is how the questions are asked by the different interviewers, who each will have developed their own individual style over time (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Therefore, whilst Bampouras et al. (2012) presented an argument for each interview being conducted by different authors, this approach can also be viewed as a limitation of their work. The findings of Bampouras et al. (2012) suggested that the coach and sport scientist work together to collect relevant information and then process this before feeding it back to the athlete, in a process where the coach acts as a gatekeeper for the information passed to the athletes, this can be seen in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1.** The image on the left is a model of the performance analysis process and the right shows the immutable mobile. Adapted from Bampouras et al. (2012, p. 472, p. 475)

However, the participant coach did not work directly with a sport scientist but did express a desire to work with one, so she could focus purely on the game or making substitutes and coaching players rather than trying to do performance analysis at the same time as well (Bampouras et al., 2012). The authors contend that by not including the athlete within the process (apart from being the objective observed and receiver of information) that the athletes are not being challenged intellectually and it could be of benefit both educationally and socially to empower the athletes to engage with decision making and reflection upon their own performance (Bampouras et al., 2012; Galipeau & Trudel, 2006; Jones & Bowes, 2006; Jones & Standage, 2006).

It is important that the analysts are integrated with the rest of the coaching team and organisation, as localised analytics can result in insightful analysis and interpretation of data not being received by other members of the coaching team (Wright et al., 2014). However, how the organisation values the importance of performance analysis could

potentially influence the interactions available to the analyst and the levels of support they receive (Wright et al., 2012, 2014). There is still a lack of understanding within the research about “how the relationship and dynamic process in place between the coach and analyst allows effective analysis to be produced” (Wright et al., 2014, p. 725). When looking at the current research gap, it remains unknown how important the relationship and communications between the coach and analyst are when providing effective performance analysis to athletes (Wright et al., 2014).

Wright et al. (2014) suggest that performance analysis could be a key component of athlete development and self-analysis, but it remains unknown how individual coaches approach performance analysis feedback, and there remains variability between what different coaches expect to get out of each feedback session. Whilst feedback can assist learning, it also has limitations that coaches and analysts should be aware of (Vickers, 2011; Wright et al., 2014). For example, Hodges and Franks (2008) suggested that athletes can become too reliant upon feedback and they are then unable to detect errors and consequently correct errors for themselves. However, it remains unknown whether coaches and analysts are aware of these limitations and complexities when delivering feedback and these issues may influence whether feedback is or is not implemented by the analysts and coaches in certain situations (Wright et al., 2014).

Francis and Jones (2014) highlighted that despite previous studies undertaken (e.g. Bampouras et al., 2012; Groom & Cushion, 2005; Nelson et al., 2014) further research was required to gain insights about the views and opinions of players towards performance analysis. Therefore, seventy-three elite male rugby union players were used as participants for a questionnaire which contained both open-ended and close-ended questions (Francis & Jones, 2014). From this pool four players were selected to participate in an interview with the aim of drawing out real life examples surrounding the use of performance analysis and

how those individuals had developed their perceptions of it (Francis & Jones, 2014). The themes that emerged from the questionnaires and interviews were: utilising video for player improvement, preparing for a match, using video for reflection and other psychological tools and finally, player suggestions for improvements (Francis & Jones, 2014). Overall, Francis and Jones (2014) found that the players think performance analysis is a beneficial tool which can aid them with their development and preparation for matches. Furthermore, they suggest that coaches should use a variety of delivery methods to cater for different learning styles within the group and encourage active engagement from the players in order to increase their knowledge of the game by conducting analysis on both their own performance and performances of others (Francis & Jones, 2014).

Drawing upon the findings of past research (e.g. Booroff et al., 2016; Groom et al., 2012; Potrac et al., 2002), Wright et al. (2016) highlighted the importance of performance analysis feedback research acknowledging the significance of the coach taking into account the context, interpersonal and social factors, and being able to deliver information to athletes correctly and efficiently. Their work aimed to build on previous studies by focusing on two objectives, which were to identify player perceptions about receiving performance analysis feedback and secondly to determine how involved they felt with the process (Wright et al., 2016). Within Wright et al.'s (2016) work, 48 male footballers from three different professional clubs at both academy and senior level completed an online questionnaire, before 22 were selected to participate in a semi-structured interview. The findings highlighted that different coaches have different approaches to the feedback sessions, with some encouraging open discussions and debates while others are more coach-centred where they deliver all information (Wright et al., 2016). The general opinion of the participants was positive towards sessions in which they were encouraged to ask questions and engage in discussion, because it aided "their learning, game understanding, individual development

and identification of strengths and weaknesses” (Wright et al., 2016, p. 1022). Although the study found some common themes the authors were keen to highlight that a ‘one size fits all’ approach will not work when delivering feedback because the players’ learning approaches and preferences need to be considered as well as the coach’s awareness of their delivery approach and preferences (Groom & Cushion, 2005; Groom et al., 2011; Wright et al., 2016).

Finally, McKenna, Cowan, Stevenson and Baker (2018) explored the experiences of various performance analysis interns based at professional youth football clubs by adopting a case study approach. The research conducted individual semi-structured interviews with each of the participants until the point of data saturation was reached (McKenna et al., 2018). The results outlined four phases that were central to the participants’ experiences, which were building relationships, establishing an analysis system, feedback process and establishing effect (McKenna et al., 2018). By discussing these aspects of the interns’ experiences, the work aimed to provide “an insight for new practitioners and to better prepare them for the occupational culture” (McKenna et al., 2018, p. 12). Furthermore, the authors hoped that their work would encourage coaches, analysts and educators to reflect on their pedagogical application and training approaches as well as encouraging other researchers to share accounts of their professional experiences (McKenna et al., 2018).

Despite the increasing amount of performance analysis research, there remains a lack of understanding within the literature concerning how information is shared between the individuals involved within the process (Wright et al., 2014). By carrying out case study-based research, insights might be provided concerning how performance analysis is used in various applied contexts (Mackenzie & Cushion, 2013; Nelson et al., 2014; Wright et al., 2014). Furthermore, by focusing upon an interpretive qualitative approach, our knowledge surrounding the effective use of performance analysis might be enhanced, which could

potentially provide pedagogical underpinning to the effectiveness of how performance analysis is implemented within elite sporting environment (Mackenzie & Cushion, 2013; Wright et al., 2014). An aspect of performance analysis is how video-based feedback is delivered to athletes by coaches, or analysts, and the research studies that have begun to investigate this area will be discussed in the following section.

### 2.2.1 Limitations of previous research

Whilst the research discussed in this section has helped scholars and coaches to better understand some of the experiences and thoughts of practitioners within an elite performance analysis setting, there are some empirical and theoretical limitations to the work which will now be considered. Firstly, the work of Bampouras et al. (2012) included participants from different sports for the data collection; the reasoning for doing this was any emergent themes from the data would represent the wider use of performance analysis within sport, rather than from one specific sport. However, it could be argued that to gain a better contextual understanding, research should involve more participants from within the same sport in order to uncover multiple realities of what occurs. That is, by only interviewing one participant, the research only presents a single perspective from the given sport, which may or may not represent the range of experiences within that sport. Additionally, by becoming embedded within a particular sport, a researcher may be better able to provide their own account for events that occurred and also contest any information given during an interview that was perhaps attempting to portray a participant in a more favourable position. Whilst the work of Mckenna et al. (2018) examined the experiences of interns imbedded in their environment, they realised that their research only considered the perception of the performance analyst, and that future research should also consider the views of other

stakeholders such as coaches and athletes. Additionally, McKenna et al. (2018) suggested that future research should investigate contexts outside of football, including different countries and sports to increase the understanding of performance analysis applications.

A few of the studies have adopted larger scale inquiries into the research area of performance analysis by using surveys to gain the opinions of more people (see Francis & Jones, 2014; Wright et al., 2012; Wright et al., 2016). Of these studies, the work of Francis and Jones (2014) and Wright et al. (2016) also carried out qualitative interviews with selected participants following the completion of the online survey or questionnaire; whilst the research by Wright et al. (2012) was purely quantitative in nature. The work of Wright et al. (2012) gave an early insight into how coaches use performance analysis, but the coaches were unable to expand their answers when completing the questionnaire. Therefore, the authors recommended that future work should use one to one interviews with coaches to better understand this area of research (Wright et al., 2012). Furthermore, the work of Francis and Jones (2014) acknowledged that their research had some limitations which should be considered before undertaking future studies. For example, their work did not utilise the player interviews to the full effect due to time constraints upon the players after completing the questionnaire (Francis & Jones, 2014). Consequently, future research should consider utilising interviews to better effect to ensure that as much time is dedicated to collecting this type of data as is required to cover the necessary topics.

The work of both Francis and Jones (2014) and Wright et al. (2016) adopted a similar research design by recruiting large numbers of participants and then carrying out follow up interviews with a selected number of them. The main difference between the two studies was the sport in which the research was undertaken; footballers (Wright et al., 2016) and rugby players (Francis & Jones, 2014). Additionally, Wright et al. (2012) carried out a similar participant sampling strategy in terms of numbers of participants recruited, but the data



within this study was quantitative in nature, drawing instead upon coaches rather than athletes as the participants. However, neither of these qualitative studies utilised a theoretical stance to interpret the data that was collected to help the reader make sense of the participants' experiences and comments about performance analysis. Similarly, the work of Bampouras et al. (2012) did not explicitly draw upon social theory to make sense of the data; although, the work did suggest a model of the performance analysis process. Furthermore, the work proposed that future research could potentially adopt the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and use a grounded theory approach but across a large sample size and contexts (Bampouras et al., 2012).

Indeed, in their critical review of the use of performance analysis in football, Mackenzie and Cushion (2013) illustrated a number of methodological issues (e.g. the isolation of variables stripped of context, operational definitions and classification issues, & small sample sizes etc.). The review highlighted a number of important gaps within performance analysis research, and suggested that to further our understanding of practice, research should shift towards applied performance analysis (Mackenzie & Cushion, 2013). If this shift were to occur, it would aid the understanding of "the intricacies and dynamics relating to performance analysis as a form of feedback" (Mackenzie & Cushion, 2013, p. 656). Furthermore, it was proposed that the effectiveness and delivery of performance analysis has been under-researched, apart from the work by Groom et al. (2011), meaning that little is known about the impact it has on athlete learning and performance (Mackenzie & Cushion, 2013). Despite suggestions from Groom and Cushion (2004, 2005) and Groom et al. (2011) that the learning processes that both the coaches and players engage in have significant interest, "little research has investigated performance analysis from a learning perspective" (Mackenzie & Cushion, 2013, p. 656).

In order to investigate these under-developed areas, researchers need to widen the variety of data collection methodologies to include qualitative methods, such as interviews, case studies and ethnographies (Groom et al., 2012; Mackenzie & Cushion, 2013). Mackenzie and Cushion (2013, p. 657) commented that the methodological process used too frequently within performance analysis has been “positivist and key performance indicator driven research that has focused on attempting to predict successful future performance”. In order to increase the impact of performance analysis research, future work should consider cultural and social influences along with the learning experiences of the participants, when giving or receiving performance analysis (Groom et al., 2011; Mackenzie & Cushion, 2013).

In conclusion, future research should endeavour to collect in-depth data from a single sporting context rather than drawing data from a wide range of sports and participants, which would allow us to develop a deeper contextual understanding of practice (Bampouras et al., 2012; McKenna et al., 2018). Furthermore, when adopting interviewing as a data collection method, researchers should adopt a focused approach to allow sufficient time to cover all the necessary topics in-depth, ideally in a one-to-one manner to allow different voices and opinions to be shared (Francis & Jones, 2014; Wright et al., 2012).

### **2.3 Findings of video-based feedback literature**

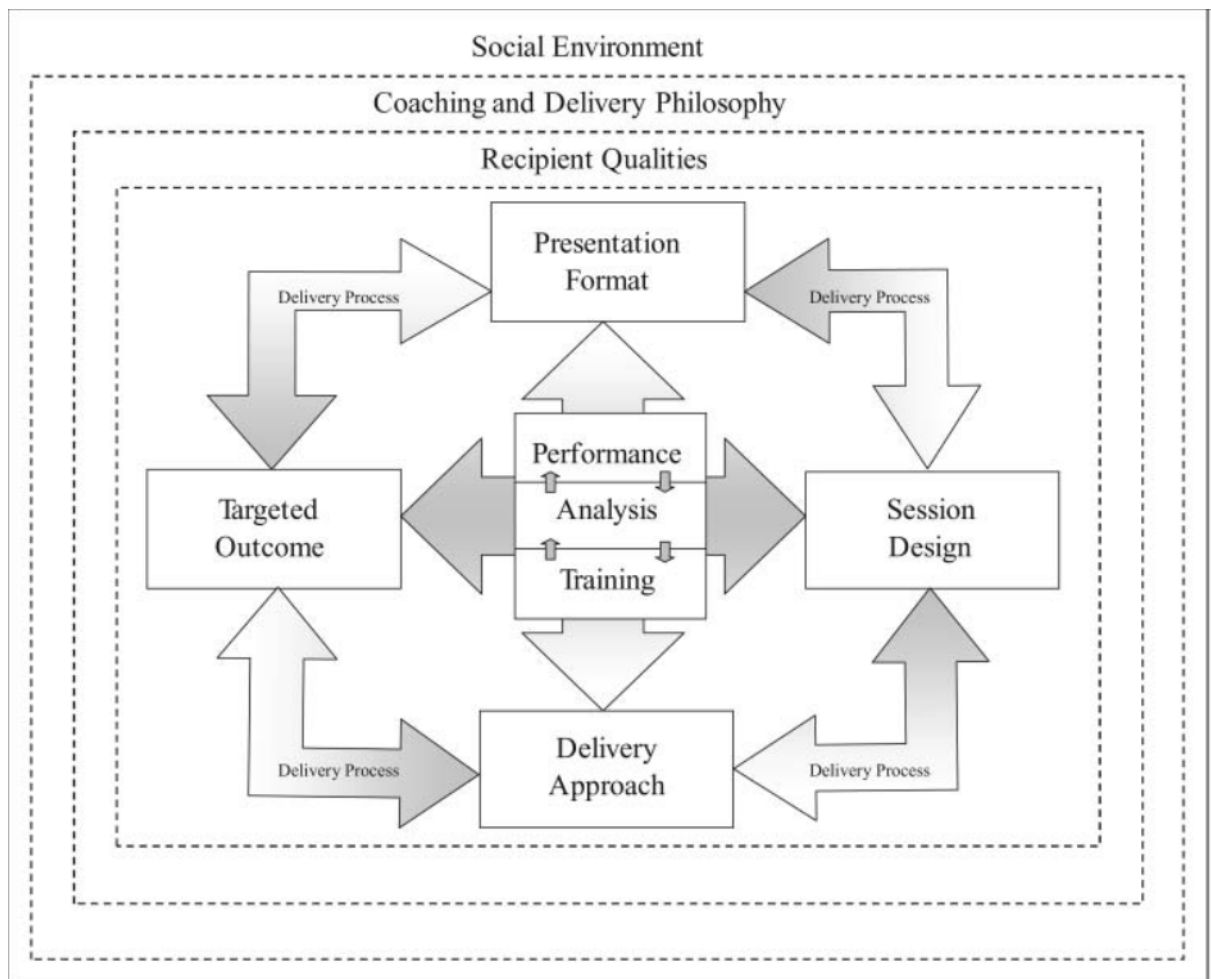
An important factor within performance analysis is sharing information with the athletes to assist their learning and help them to improve for future performances. McArdle, Martin, Lennon and Moore (2010) explored eleven athletes’ and six coaches’ experiences of debriefing via semi-structured interviews to understand the aims, processes and outcomes associated with it in a sporting context. The experiences were then categorised in five themes

which were: debriefing as a collaborative process, the whys of debriefing, debriefing as a changing process, debriefing as a constrained exercise and debriefing as a technology-driven analysis process (McArdle et al., 2010). The research found that the coaches and athletes believed that debriefing was being used to evaluate performances and learn from them, and any psychological benefits were a side-effect rather than the primary purpose of the debrief (McArdle et al., 2010). Finally, the authors suggested that whilst their work began to highlight the understanding and experiences of debriefing within sport, more qualitative research was required to see if these thoughts and experiences were replicated by other coaches and athletes (McArdle et al., 2010).

Despite the research into the different aspects of performance analysis and the debriefing process, the pedagogical understanding of how performance analysis is used within the coaching process remains underdeveloped. Voight (2007) highlighted the need to guide coaches by developing more evidence-based theories, rather than building models and formulae to fit in with the coaching process. In an attempt to answer this call for more evidence-based theories, Groom et al. (2011, p. 17) aimed “to build a theoretical framework to understand the delivery of video-based performance analysis by English youth soccer coaches, building towards a grounded theory of applied practice”. The following section will discuss how some investigations have evolved to provide more evidence-based studies to inform coaching practice.

The work by Groom et al. (2011) involved 14 English youth soccer coaches as the participants, who were selected using purposive theoretical sampling. The selected methodology was grounded theory as this approach can offer insight and enhance understanding (Groom et al., 2011; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Whilst the method adopted for the work by Groom et al. (2011) will not be replicated for this particular project, it is still a crucial paper because it provides vital information concerning video-based feedback in elite

sport, especially the delivery approach used by coaches and has provided a platform for future research to build on within this discipline. Furthermore, the process used for data collection can also provide guidance; the data was collected using both open-ended and semi-structured interviews over a 12-month period. Initially information was gathered regarding the participants' background and demographic, before exploring issues related to video-based feedback until the participant had no more information to provide and was repeating data that had already been collected (Groom et al., 2011). The interviews were transcribed verbatim and then coded via open coding, axial coding and selective coding as part of an iterative process so that the presented results demonstrated the concepts and the relationships between the concepts (Groom et al., 2011). The results highlighted three categories (contextual factors, delivery approach and targeted outcome) which were explained using subcategories and further associated concepts before being integrated into the final grounded theory that is shown in Figure 2 (Groom et al., 2011).



**Figure 2. A grounded theory of the delivery of video-based performance analysis by England youth soccer coaches (Groom et al., 2011, p. 24)**

The delivery process originates from one of the three central elements (performance, analysis or training). The coach can then decide how to plan the intervention by starting with either the presentation format, session design, delivery approach or targeted outcome; the arrows connecting these different aspects show “the cyclical nature of the delivery process” (Groom et al., 2011, p. 29). Surrounding all of these aspects are the contextual factors, such as coaching philosophy and recipient qualities, and social environment, which influence the decisions made during the planning and delivery process.

Additionally, Nelson et al. (2014) investigated a single player's perspective of receiving video-based feedback by conducting the research from an interpretive perspective. The reason for selecting this approach was to "focus on how the participant constructed and continues to construct social reality, [...] especially in relation to his experiences of the pedagogical application of video-based performance analysis technology" (Groom et al., 2011, p. 21). Coaching scholars have recommended utilising this approach and perspective as it can provide a valuable lens to gain rich insights into the working lives of both coaches and athletes, which is often chaotic and complex (Nelson et al., 2014; Potrac & Jones, 2009b). However, this approach has a weakness similar to other research, as the authors only investigated the player's perspective and not both the player and the coach. The authors recognised this limitation within their conclusion and suggested that future research should consider including field notes to capture the interactions between the coach and athlete, and fellow athletes, as well as conducting interviews with all the subjects involved to try to avoid similar limitations in future work (Nelson et al., 2014). In addition, to further strengthen future work, the life histories of the subjects could also be included to fully appreciate how those involved with the video-based feedback sessions developed their knowledge, beliefs and expectations within their own sporting environment (Biesta, Field, Hodgkinson, Macleod & Goodson, 2011). Another limitation, which was discussed during the conclusion, was the fact the data provided "a retrospective 'snap-shot' of John's experiences" and therefore it is not possible to confirm whether the account given was representative of what occurred as it is based upon the individual's memory (Nelson et al., 2014, p. 36). Nevertheless, there are benefits of the work, and it has influenced this particular investigation by providing ideas of areas that should be observed and discussed during interviews. For example, the respect between a coach and athlete, as well as the involvement of the individuals during the video-based feedback sessions (Nelson et al., 2014). The advice

given during the conclusion can also be drawn upon when planning the methodology in order to avoid the same limitations being encountered again.

Whilst the work by both Groom et al. (2011) and Nelson et al. (2014) has provided initial insights into the coaching practices of video-based feedback sessions as well as the experiences of a player receiving video-based feedback, it has been based upon “retrospective interview data” (Groom et al., 2012, p. 440). Therefore, the pedagogical understanding of how to best utilise video-based feedback within coaching is still not fully understood, and requires further investigation; ideally, this would be undertaken ‘in situ’ (Groom et al., 2012). By carrying out ecological based investigations into the applied use of video-based feedback sessions the interactions between the coach, athlete and performance analyst (if present) can begin to be understood. This is the approach that Groom et al. (2012, p. 440) adopted with their aim to “provide a detailed examination of the pedagogical interactions that occurred between an elite-level youth football coach and his players during the team’s video-based performance analysis coaching sessions”. The specific focus was to use concepts from conversation analysis to explore coach-athlete ‘talking in action’, which is an approach previously used within social science literature such as doctor-patient interactions and courtroom trials (Groom et al., 2012; Heritage & Clayman, 2010). The research intended to improve theoretical understanding of coaching and, specifically, the interactions between the coach and athletes, rather than provide a description of what has happened (Groom et al., 2012; Jones, 2009).

The participants included the head coach and 22 of his academy players and they were investigated over the course of six video-based feedback sessions; at the beginning of the study the head coach lacked experience at delivering video-based feedback sessions (Groom et al., 2012). Due to the lead author’s previous experience as a performance analyst, he provided “technical video analysis support for a 10-month season” (Groom et al., 2012,

p. 443). The six video feedback sessions were recorded from the back of the classroom in such a way that the head coach, analyst, all players and the interactive board were all included for analysis (Groom et al., 2012). The analysis of the session was conducted using an applied conversation analysis approach, which is “the systematic analysis of the talk produced in everyday situations of human interaction: talk-in-interaction” (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008, p. 11). The results from the analysis of the feedback sessions revealed that, “the coach attempted to exercise control over the sequential organisation of the sessions, via asymmetrical turn-taking allocations, an unequal opportunity to talk, control over the topic of discussion within the interactions and the use of questioning to select speakers to take turns to talk and reinforce his interactional goals” (Groom et al., 2012, p. 453). Their conclusion highlights the power and control held by the coach over the players in this environment, it would be interesting to make comparisons across different sports, levels and age groups to see if the coach still behaves in the same manner. However, from studying the existing literature it would appear that there is a dominant authoritarian discourse within the coach-athlete relationship (Cushion and Jones, 2006; Potrac, et al., 2002; Purdy, et al., 2008) and so future findings concerning behaviours would be expected to be the same as existing literature.

A suggestion for future studies by Groom et al. (2012) was the consideration of coaches’ beliefs concerning athlete learning and how it affects their coaching behaviour, particularly when utilising video-based performance feedback. To understand the learning surrounding performance analysis, the investigator needs to consider the complex and inter-changing environmental and social inter-dependencies (Cushion et al., 2010; Mackenzie & Cushion, 2013); this includes the athletes, and coaches, and the world they inhabit and internalise (Mackenzie & Cushion, 2013). Whilst research has studied reflection as a by-product of video-based performance analysis (Groom & Cushion, 2004, 2005), there has not



been a categorical exploration into video-based feedback as a learning perspective (Mackenzie & Cushion, 2013). Therefore, little is known about the typical way information is distributed to athletes within video-based feedback sessions and as such further investigations into this area are justified (Mackenzie & Cushion, 2013).

Booroff et al. (2016) examined the video-based pedagogical practices of a head coach at an elite level football academy. The aim was to build upon “the limited critical work that addressing the application of video-based coaching” and how the head coach strategically used the tools available to him to fulfil the expected objectives and outcomes within the environment (Booroff et al., 2016, p. 117). The study adopted an interpretivist approach with the aim of understanding how the participant makes sense of his experiences and actions (Booroff et al., 2016). The coach participated in four interviews to allow the researcher to gain demographic information, understanding around coaching philosophy, as well as their uses of performance analysis technology (Booroff et al., 2016). The second phase of data collection involved the researcher undertaking observations and field notes of ten video-based feedback sessions which raised additional questions that were answered within two follow up interviews (Booroff et al., 2016). The results highlighted three main topics that demonstrate how the participant coach calculated their video-based feedback sessions, these were: 1. strategically focusing on better players, 2. fostering respect, professionalism and discipline, 3. preparing players for being released (Booroff et al., 2016). The work goes on to discuss how the coach’s actions can be viewed as political in order to achieve the desired coaching needs that are expected of him by his employers (Booroff et al., 2016). Finally, Booroff et al. (2016, p. 122) state that “there remains a paucity of empirical research into the practical application and utilisation of video-based performance analysis technology by sports coaches and performance analysts, as well as how athletes understand and engage with such technologies”. They go on to suggest that future research should use

diverse methods to help develop rich insights into how coaches, performance analysts and athletes experience and engage with video-based performance analysis (Booroff et al., 2016; Groom, Nelson, Potrac & Smith, 2014; Huggan et al., 2015; Smith & Sparkes, 2009a).

Additionally, Brümmer (2018) carried out ethnographic research investigating the practices of video analysis in high performance youth football. The research gathered data by conducting 18 months of participant observations as well as qualitative interviews. The findings of the research were split into four areas that were: video-based match assessment by coaches, collective video analysis by the team, individual feedback sessions and self-organized performance analysis by the players (Brümmer, 2018). Furthermore, Brümmer (2018, p. 7) highlighted that “videos assume different meanings and fulfil different functions within different contexts of training”. For example, the videos provide the coaches and players with an opportunity to assess the performance and generate new tactical knowledge about the game (Brümmer, 2018). Nevertheless, Brümmer (2018, p.7) argued that because there is an overarching belief that a video can provide an “omniscient perspective”, the danger is that the player’s perspectives are “muted and delegitimized” even though they might be of equal importance to understanding the performance.

Middlemas and Harwood (2018) examined the psychological factors within the delivery of video-based feedback by exploring the views of both players and coaches in elite youth football. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 11 male coaches and 12 male players to discover their views and perspectives (Middlemas & Harwood, 2018). The results were presented in three categories which were the coaches and players perspectives concerning the psychological responses to video feedback, the video feedback delivery strategies and the video feedback delivery climate (Middlemas & Harwood, 2018). Furthermore, Middlemas and Harwood (2018, p. 41) stated that “at times coaches and athletes hold markedly different perceptions about how VFB [video feedback] should be

delivered and that some coaches' feel they lack knowledge regarding their athletes' psychological responses to VFB". Therefore, it was suggested that video-based feedback might need to be delivered to athletes as part of an individualised process which is informed by the athlete preferences, developmental needs and coach philosophy (Middlemas & Harwood, 2018).

Taylor, Potrac, Nelson, Jones and Groom (2017) argue that previous literature exploring the use of video-based technology has been conducted using mainly positivistic research paradigms which seek recommendations for practice rather than engaging in the study of practice. Therefore, the complex nature of athlete learning and coaching practice has arguably been largely ignored and so to address this issue the research aimed "to highlight such relationships in action between Claire [the participant], the camera, the recording, the coach and her team-mates" (Taylor et al., 2017, p. 114). The work wanted to challenge the orthodox coaching practices surrounding video-based technology in elite level sport and develop an understanding of the participant's experiences through a neo-Foucauldian notion of surveillance and using Mathiesen's concept of the synopticon (Taylor et al., 2017). The participant's interpretation of video recordings in both training sessions and matches was explored over five one-hour in-depth reflexive interviews (Taylor et al., 2017). Taylor et al. (2017) found that the participant felt like she was under surveillance during training sessions, even when the coaches were not physically present, due to the utilisation of constant video recording. This further highlights the work of Nelson et al. (2014) who stated that the application of video-based performance analysis feedback is far from an unproblematic process. Therefore, future research needs to build on the existing literature to gain a deeper and richer understanding of how video-based feedback is utilised by coaches and the impact it has on the pedagogical experiences of athletes.

Finally, Magill, Nelson, Jones and Potrac (2017, p. 217) intended to “stimulate critical reflection on athletes’ meaning making in video-based feedback sessions”. By adopting the work of Burkitt (1997, 1999, 2002, 2014) for the primary theoretical framework, the work aimed to provide insights to the “dynamic emotional flows” that occurred during the sessions (Magill et al., 2017, p. 218). The study fused together the data collection, analysis and write-up phases which enabled the authors “to form a cyclical and iterative process of inquiry” that included written accounts from the lead author and semi-structured interviews with additional athletes (Magill et al., 2017, p. 219). Two fictional narratives were used to represent the data. The first narrative focused on “the interplay between Megan’s emotions; her interactions with the head coach, and, relatedly, her efforts to manage emotional displays in situationally expedient ways”, whilst the second narrative explored how “Abigail’s experiences of specific emotions were not only reflected in the interconnection between her playing identity and understanding of subcultural values, but also in her immediate reluctance to avoid being seen not to act in the ‘right way’” (Magill et al., 2017, p. 220). The work concludes by encouraging more research into the social relations where coaching technology is utilised, because this could lead to “a greater understanding of the intended and unforeseen consequences of using technology” and in turn could develop a refined approach that considers “the social environment in which it is utilised, and the social sensibilities that underpin its application” (Magill et al., 2017, p. 228).

Despite the increased research into how performance analysis is utilised within the coaching process and how video-based feedback is delivered to athletes, there have been both empirical and theoretical limitations with previous studies. Therefore, the following section will consider each of these areas and suggest how these limitations might be overcome for this research project.

### 2.3.1 Limitations of previous research

As stated previously, the work of both Groom et al. (2011) and Nelson et al. (2014) was based upon retrospective interview data and therefore it was recommended that more research should be carried out 'in situ' (Groom et al., 2012). The reason why retrospective interview data can be viewed as a limitation is because the collected data is dependent upon the participant's understanding of the present and, therefore, the participant's views on what happened during the past may have changed since they occurred (Goodson, Biesta, Tedder & Adair, 2010; Nelson et al., 2014). Furthermore, Mackenzie and Cushion (2013) called for an increased variety within data collection, particularly qualitative methods, to further understanding and knowledge within this academic area. Despite this suggestion, much of the work since then has been similar in terms of methods with many studies adopting case studies based upon interview data. These case study approaches have tended to utilise small numbers of participants when collecting the data (see Bampouras et al., 2012; Groom et al., 2012; Huggan et al., 2015; Nelson et al., 2014; Taylor et al., 2017). However, some research studies have been based upon observing or recording video-based feedback sessions to either compliment interview data (see Booroff et al., 2016) or to be used as an alternative (see Groom et al., 2012). Additionally, Magill et al. (2017) used collaborative critical reflection and 10 in-depth interviews with elite female footballers as part of their cyclical and iterative process. The work of Groom et al. (2012) was based upon recording six video-based feedback sessions before carrying out a conversational analysis, whilst Booroff et al. (2016) undertook four primary interviews with their participant, before observing ten video-based feedback sessions which led to more questions that were answered in another two follow up interviews. Alternatively, future work may wish to adopt an approach that has been used before and conduct multiple interviews with the participant if it is not possible to

collect all the required data within one interview (see Booroff et al., 2016; Huggan et al., 2015; Nelson et al., 2014; Taylor et al., 2017).

Considering the limitations of previous work already mentioned within this section, this particular research study will aim to increase the variety of qualitative methods utilised within the video-based performance analysis by adopting an ethnographic approach as suggested by Mackenzie and Cushion (2013). By utilising this approach, the research will not be entirely based upon retrospective interview data like previous studies (see Groom et al., 2011; Nelson et al., 2014) and will be collected 'in situ' as recommended by Groom et al. (2012). As well as empirical limitations within previous studies there have also been some theoretical limitations too, which will now be considered.

The grounded theory work by Groom et al. (2011) provided a platform to build upon for future qualitative research within the performance analysis field. Since this work, there have been various case-study approaches used (Bampouras et al., 2012; Booroff et al., 2016; Huggan et al., 2015; Nelson et al., 2014; Taylor et al., 2017). However, each case-study has been looking at a different aspect, for example, the work of both Huggan et al. (2015) and Booroff et al. (2016) examined the micropolitics involved within performance analysis. Huggan et al. (2015) explored the point of view of the analyst and protecting his job and how he acted micropolitically in order to do this; whilst Booroff et al. (2016) considered how an academy football coach used video-based feedback in a political manner to achieve the various outcomes and objectives expected within his environment.

Taylor et al. (2017) adopted a neo- Foucauldian approach to suggest that video technology within coaching was being used a surveillance mechanism by coaches; this work was supported by using Mathiesen's concept of the synopticon. Whilst this was a novel approach to understanding the participant's experiences and highlights that providing

performance analysis feedback is not a simple process, there is still a need for research to investigate the impact video-based feedback has on the pedagogical experiences of athletes (Taylor et al., 2017). In addition, the work of Magill et al. (2017) drew upon Burkitt's work addressing emotions and social relations to uncover athletes' experiences within video-based feedback sessions.

A case-study approach which has been widely used within this area (see Bampouras et al., 2012; Groom et al., 2012; Huggan et al., 2015; Nelson et al., 2014; Taylor et al., 2017) can represent the specific context investigated, but, as the work of Groom et al. (2012) suggested drawing generalisations from a case-study should be done carefully. Within the case-study approach of Nelson et al. (2014), they drew upon the work of Piaget (1950, 1972) and Vygotsky (1962, 1978) to try and make sense of the learning that was attached to the interactions of the participant during feedback sessions. Furthermore, Nelson et al. (2014) utilised the work of both Darwall (1977, 2006) and Hudson (1980) as additional explanatory frameworks.

Finally, the work of Groom et al. (2012) examined what occurred during a video-based performance analysis feedback session by recording the session and then carrying out a conversation analysis approach. This work helped to build upon the grounded theory work and advances the knowledge and understanding of what occurs during a video-based feedback session. The work of Raven (1992, 1993, 2001) was selected to help explain the findings in terms "of the social organisation of power within the context" (Groom et al., 2012, p. 447). Furthermore, Groom et al. (2012, p. 454) recommended that future studies may wish to focus on how "interactional practices are culturally produced and reproduced".

After considering the previous theoretical approaches used within the performance analysis literature, it is believed that investigating the interactions that occur within a video-

based feedback session could help advance the understanding and knowledge in this particular field. This would also address the recommendation made by Magill et al. (2017, p. 228) for an increase of research into social relations where coaching technology is applied, as this could lead to “a greater understanding of the intended and unforeseen consequences of using technology”. Therefore, the different theoretical options available to understanding interactions shall be considered in the following section.

In summary, most of the previous work examining video-based feedback has been based predominately on retrospective data, which is fallible to the limitations of participant recall. Therefore, it has been suggested that future work should collect data ‘in situ’ from multiple sources to overcome such methodological limitations (Groom et al., 2011; 2012; Nelson et al., 2014). By adopting an ethnographic approach, the data will be collected ‘in situ’ and there will also be an increase to the variety of qualitative methods being used (Mackenzie & Cushion, 2013).

## **2.4 Theoretical approaches to understanding social interactions**

Social interaction is the very stuff of human life. The individuals of all societies move through life in terms of a continuous series of social interactions. It is in the context of such social encounters that the individual expresses the significant elements of his culture, whether they are matters of economics, social status, personal values, self-image, or religious belief (Goldschmidt, 1972, p. 59).

One of the most renowned sociology departments is the Chicago School of Sociology, which had a Golden Age (1893-1933) and then a Second Silver Age (1945-1965) (Fine, 1995; Delamont, 2001). George Herbert Mead, an American philosopher from the Golden Age of



the Chicago School, tried to understand the way in which individuals became social creatures (Hacking, 2004). Herbert Blumer studied at the University of Chicago and was influenced by the work of Mead and other sociologists, such as W.I. Thomas and Robert Park (Nelson, Groom, Potrac & Marshall, 2016). In Blumer's 1969 text, he brought Mead's philosophically-based ideas to sociology and formulated a cohesive theory with specific methodological implications (Carter & Fuller, 2016). From this came the term 'symbolic interactionism', which is a framework and perspective in sociology that addresses how society is created and maintained through repeated interactions among individuals (Carter & Fuller, 2016). Blumer (1969, p. 180) stated the following fundamental principles about symbolic interactionism:

1. The ways in which human beings relate to things are a function of what they mean to them.
2. This meaning results from interactions with other people, or is derived from them.
3. This meaning is manipulated or modified by each person in the process of interpreting objects.

The work of Blumer (1969) has since been used by researchers within various fields of study to interpret some of the results that have been found. For example, Poczwadowski, Barott and Peregoy (2002) and Poczwadowski, Barott and Henschen (2002) used Blumer's (1969) work about symbolic interactionism to explain the coach-athlete relationship as this theory aligned with the phenomenological and interpretivist approach that they were adopting. Furthermore Poczwadowski et al. (2002a, p. 103) stated that Blumer "advocated that the goal of the scientific quest should be understanding and explaining human behaviour; unlike positivist researchers, he did not seek its prediction and control".

However, Poczwadowski et al. (2002a, 2002b) did not just solely use Blumer's work and they also used the work of Peter Blau's (1964) social exchange theory to explain other aspects of the coach-athlete relationship. Blau gained a PhD from Columbia University in 1952, before going on to teach at the University of Chicago from 1953 until 1970 (Jones & Bailey, 2011). Jones and Bailey (2011, p. 109) suggested that Blau tried to "connect the everyday theories of Erving Goffman and Georg Simmel to the broader thinking of Max Weber and Talcott Parsons". Blau's work involved an exploration of organisational and social structures, with his most renowned book being *'Exchange and Power in Social Life'* (1964) (Jones & Bailey, 2011). Poczwadowski et al. (2002a, p. 104) stated that Blau's (1964) social exchange theory can be used "to understand the interpersonal relationship between two social actors (dyad) and among group members" and that the basic assumption of the theory is that "interpersonal relationships can be conceptualized as the repeated exchanges of rewards and resources between people that tend to balance out and stabilize in time".

Poczwadowski et al. (2002a, 2002b) found that social exchange theory could only be used to explain behaviours to a certain degree and so the work also drew upon the negotiated order theory of Erving Goffman (1959). An alternative option for understanding interactions could be found through adopting the work of Erving Goffman, and so the work of Goffman and how it has been used previously within sporting literature will be further explored in the following sections.

## **2.5 Theoretical contribution of Erving Goffman**

The work of Erving Goffman (1959, 1961, 1963, 1967, 1983) focused upon the social situations and interactions in varying settings and institutions. His work discussed how individuals present themselves to others in various situations and who is allowed to see certain performances and how this influences the individuals involved and their behaviours (Goffman, 1959, 1963). His work also considered encounters between individuals, and how these are structured differently by varying social groups within society; this included total institutions, such as prisons, mental hospitals, boarding schools, army barracks or monasteries/convents (Goffman, 1961). Depending upon the different institution that the individual was within, they had a different social position upon their release. This could either be favourable or unfavourable, for example, an elite boarding school or prison, for the individual and lead to them announcing their institution with pride or fear of stigmatisation and attempting to conceal their past (Goffman, 1961).

Goffman (1961, p. 7) suggested that that any group of people “developed a life of their own that becomes meaningful, reasonable and normal once you get close to it” and the best way to understand and learn about these worlds is to submit yourself to the members of the group in their daily round of incidents and witness them first hand. Methodologically, this approach is known as carrying out ethnographic work, where the researcher/s experience the world they are investigating first-hand, and collect data through a number of sources, such as field notes examining participant observations and a journal or diary of events that occurred; these recorded experiences are then usually subjected to analysis and disseminated through written findings.

The use of Goffman’s theories within academic literature has been widespread amongst researchers across many disciplines. For example, it has been used within: Business

and Economics (see Clark & Mangham, 2004; Gibbons, 2005; Moore, 2012; Patriotta & Spedale, 2009; Ross, 2007; Sheane, 2012), Law and Politics (see Myrick, 2013; Rose, Diamond & Baker, 2010; Schimmelfennig, 2003), Medical and Nursing (see Bolton, 2001; Brouwer, Drummond & Willis, 2012; Lewin & Reeves, 2011; Riley & Manias, 2005; Shattell, 2004; Tanner & Timmons, 2000; Wittenberd-Lyles, Cie'Gee, Oliver & Demiris, 2009) as well as Education and Teaching (see Larson & Tsitsos, 2013; McDonald, Higgins & Shuker, 2008; van Es, Tunney, Goldsmith & Seago, 2014; Whiteside & Kelly, 2016). Goffman's theories have also been used within sporting literature as his work allows us to gain a better understanding of the social aspects involved within sporting environments (Jones et al., 2002; 2003; Potrac et al., 2002). Therefore, the following section will consider how Goffman's theories have been used within sports literature previously, before studying how Goffman has been used within the narrower field of sports coaching.

## 2.6 The use of Goffman in sport

In 2002, Jones et al. (2002) called upon academics to use Goffman's work and theories to understand social aspects of the coaching process. Prior to this suggestion academics had only used Goffman's work within sport literature sparingly (see D'Arripe-Longueville, Saury, Fournier & Durand, 2001; Hughes & Coakley, 1991; Schmitt, 1993). Since 2002, academics have used Goffman's work much more regularly, with work focusing upon theories from Goffman's (1959) *'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life'*; some of the more common concepts that have been utilised from this work include *'performance'*, *'front'* and *'impression management'*. However, Goffman's writing has also been used from his other works including, but not restricted to, *'Asylums'* (1961), *'Frame Analysis'* (1974), *'Interaction Ritual'* (1967), and *'Stigma'* (1963).

Appendix A highlights 56 different journal articles that are related to sport and utilise the work of Goffman in some form. The most commonly used work is *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) with 39 of the articles referencing this book, the majority of the time it is used in conjunction with other Goffman work, but occasionally it is the only Goffman work referenced (see Agyemang, Williams & Kim, 2015; Chesterfield, Potrac & Jones, 2010; Darko & Mackintosh, 2016; Guerin-Eagleman & Burch, 2016; King, 2004; Nelson, et al., 2013; O'Neill, 2004; Potrac & Jones, 2009b; Purdy & Jones, 2011). The second most utilised Goffman work is *Interaction Ritual* (1967) with 23 of the articles referencing the book, once again like *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), *Interaction Ritual* (1967) is mainly used in conjunction with other Goffman work although Hughes and Coakley (1991) are the only exception to this. The amount of times that authors used both *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) and *Interaction Ritual* (1967) in their work totalled 18. The next most popular Goffman works are *Stigma* (1963), *Asylums* (1961), *Frame Analysis* (1974), *Encounters* (1961) and *Where the Action is* (1969); however, these are not used as widely as the previously mentioned *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) and *Interaction Ritual* (1967). *Stigma* (1963) is used in 13 of the articles, *Frame Analysis* (1974) is used in 12 of the articles, *Asylums* (1961) is used in 11 of the articles and both *Encounters* (1961) and *Where the Action is* (1969) are used in 9 of the articles. There are various other Goffman works that are used within the articles, but they are only used infrequently (5 times or less) compared to previously mentioned 6 books.

Whilst all this sporting literature has adopted a Goffman theory, there are still areas of his work that are yet to be utilised within research and so Jones, Potrac, Cushion and Ronglan (2011, p. 26) encouraged scholars to continue exploring his works “to dig deeper and develop their own understanding of his interpretations”. To understand how previous research has adopted the work of Goffman, this section has explored how his work has been

used across various different academic literature, before focusing in on the use of his work within sporting literature. The following section will look more closely at the articles that are specifically related to sports coaching literature.

## **2.7 The use of Goffman in sports coaching**

In 2002, Jones et al. put forward a framework in order to undertake a social analysis of coaching by exploring role, interaction and power. They suggested Goffman's theory of role distance from '*Where the Action is*' (Goffman, 1969) to examine coach behaviour. Role distance refers to when an individual distances themselves from the seriousness of a role, usually in a negative mocking sense; by behaving in this fashion it allows the personality and individuality to emerge (Jones et al., 2002; Raffel, 1999). With regards to investigating coaching practice, Jones et al. (2002) suggested Goffman's theory of interaction and concept of front. Goffman's theory of interaction "refers to events that occur whenever two or more people are in one another's presence" (Jones et al., 2002, p. 39). Goffman viewed interactions as a performance that was shaped by both the environment and audience; each performance was constructed to provide an impression that is in-keeping with the desired goals of the actors. Goffman's work on the concept of front refers to "that part of the individual's performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the social situation for those who observe performance" (Goffman, 1959, p. 22). Both the theory of interaction and concept of front are discussed within Goffman's '*The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*' (Goffman, 1959), which, as discussed earlier, has been widely used within sports and sports coaching literature.

The work by Jones et al. (2002) was the platform from which academics began to build upon and use the work of Goffman more widely with sports literature. For example,

Potrac et al. (2002) investigated the coaching behaviours of an English soccer coach by utilising systematic observations of the coach's behaviour and then interpretive interviews. By adopting the work of Goffman, the paper explained how and why the coach used particular instructions to fulfil the expectations of him in his role. In particular, Goffman was used to explain how the coach created an idealized image of his self for his 'audience'; in this instance that was the players. Potrac et al (2002) further highlighted that the coach used instruction as a deliberate strategy to demonstrate his knowledge and expertise in the expected manner for that particular social setting; therefore, he presented himself and gave the 'correct' impression to the players. Following this early work, a number of other articles have also used the findings of Potrac et al.'s (2002) study to make sense of the behaviours of sports coaches, however, much of this work does not make a direct reference to Goffman's writings (e.g. Partington & Cushion, 2013; Potrac, Jones & Cushion, 2007). More recently, Partington and Cushion (2012) have drawn upon Goffman's dramaturgical framework to explore the notion of performance and impression management. This work reported similar findings to Potrac et al. (2002), in that, the coaches within their study consciously engaged in face work and impression management to maintain credibility in their role and to put on the right front for the benefit of the audience which could include peers, players, opposition coaches, parents and those holding positions of authority within their respective clubs. Partington and Cushion (2012) made further links to other Goffman concepts from some of his other writings including: '*Stigma*' (Goffman, 1963), '*Interaction Ritual*' (Goffman, 1967) and '*Strategic Interaction*' (Goffman, 1969).

Building on the previous work using Goffman, Jones (2006) provides an autoethnographic account of his experiences as a semi-professional soccer coach. Within the work, Jones (2006) draws upon concepts from '*Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*' (Goffman, 1959), '*Stigma*' (Goffman, 1963), '*Strategic Interaction*' (Goffman, 1969) and

*'Interaction Order'* (Goffman, 1983). The account discusses the need to present an image or front to the audience (the players) in order to fulfil the expected role of a coach when delivering a pre-match team talk, at the same time, the coach is battling his own shyness which stems from a speech impediment (Goffman, 1963; Jones, 2006). The work goes on to discuss the potential consequences of the coach's actions and how the portrayed image may crumble in front of an audience and what measures can be taken to try and recover the situation and regain the desired image (Jones, 2006).

Other academic work has also investigated a coach's actions and perceptions, for example Thompson, Potrac and Jones (2015) used Goffman's impression management and stigma to make sense of the data. Once again, it was established that the coach engaged with face work in order to try and gain the respect of other coaches by making use of a professional manner or front (Thompson et al., 2015). However, the performance was not successful and as such was treated suspiciously by other more senior members of the coaching team (Thompson et al., 2015). The article made reference to Goffman's (1967) *'Interaction Ritual'* work and suggested the reason for the performance not being successful was due to the coach failing to "properly observe the rituals of deference (respect for others) and demeanour (respect for the role) required to maintain the interactional order within the club setting" (Thompson et al., 2015, p. 987).

Similarly, to previous work, Consterdine, Newton and Piggin (2013) used Goffman's theory of presentation of self and the dramaturgical perspective to extend Goffman's presence within coaching literature. Once again, the researchers found that a coach was directly involved with creating a coaching persona through using the performance, manner and front discussed within Goffman's work. By creating this plausible and engaging persona, it enabled the coach to motivate and develop the athletes as they 'bought in' to what the coach was doing (Consterdine et al., 2013). Interestingly, the manner in which the work is



portrayed suggests that the authors bought in to the dramaturgical perspective by presenting the work as a series of acts and scenes; something that would normally be found in a script of a theatrical production (Consterdine et al., 2013).

Ronglan and Aggerholm (2014) employed Goffman's concepts of performances, impression management and social roles to analyse coaches' conduct and coach-athlete relationships. Interestingly, the work investigated how Goffman (1959) commented "that performances are not to be seen as an isolated individual's presentation of their self; rather, performances are always contextualized and usually staged by teams or groups" (Ronglan & Aggerholm, 2014, p. 36). This is an aspect of Goffman's work that appears to have been overlooked during the previously mentioned articles. The work then moved on to discuss the more commonly mentioned front and back stage regions and Goffman's development of role concept (Goffman, 1961; Ronglan & Aggerholm, 2014).

Additionally, Potrac and Jones (2009a; 2009b) and Chesterfield et al. (2010) have all drawn upon *'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life'* (Goffman, 1959). As with previous work (Jones, 2006; Potrac et al., 2002), the research investigated how a coach is required to present a front to fulfil the duties of their role in an expected manner. Chesterfield et al. (2010) took this further by highlighting that sometimes the coaches also used props in combination with face work to help ensure they were seen to be acting in an appropriate manner.

Whilst the work by Pike (2012) might not be specifically related to sports coaching, it is worthy of mentioning due to the utilisation of Goffman's concepts throughout the work. Pike (2012) begins by suggesting that Goffman still has much to offer to sociology of sport and highlights why Goffman can be used to develop the discussion of the research as one of the central tenets of Goffman's work is that identities are constructed through interactions

between individuals in a dynamic social process (Goffman, 1969). Specifically, the article focuses on Goffman's (1963) concept of stigma around the ageing experience of Masters swimmers and how their self-identity may differ from their idealized self (Pike, 2012). Despite focusing on Goffman's (1963) concept of stigma, part of Goffman's (1959) work from *'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life'* is used to understand different 'regions' in which the participants perform different aspects of their self (Pike, 2012).

Wilson (2013) uses Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical model to explore the linked nature of frontstage and backstage interactions between two rugby coaches. Traditionally, the front and back stage areas have been described as specific spatial locations (Richards, 2010); but Wilson (2013, p. 193) contends that these traditional limitations do not need to be imposed as "the split between frontstage and backstage has less to do with location and more to do with the audience involved and the stance taken by the participants to each other and to their audience". The work goes on to highlight this point using different examples such as despite the coaches being stood near the players, they were sufficiently far away that their conversation would not be heard by the players even when talking at a normal volume (Wilson, 2013). Furthermore, the coaches can be having a private conversation by using hushed tones, but at the same time be aware of the players and respond to their questions using much louder voices and as such they are able to easily swap between front and back stage performances despite not having moved location (Wilson, 2013). The type of approach utilised through Goffman's dramaturgical model in this paper appears to be a novel one within the sports coaching literature and opens up the possibility of future research adopting similar methods to uncover new information within the discipline.

Whilst the work of Jones and Corsby (2015) is focused upon how Harold Garfinkel might be used to understand the decision-making process of sports coaches, it also examines Goffman's (1974) work on 'frames of reference'. Goffman (1974) felt that social frameworks

can provide background understanding for events and a way of making sense or describing these events. However, these frameworks can be recast in a term referred to as keying and Jones and Corsby (2015, p. 446) explain that “this is where something already meaningful in terms of an existing framework is viewed as something else; that is, meaning is transformed into something patterned on, but independent of, the initial frame.” Therefore, in a practical sense, it means that coaching practitioners are able to “better critique and deconstruct their own and others’ practice from alternative perspectives” (Jones & Corsby, 2015, p. 446).

## **2.8 The potential use of Goffman in performance analysis/feedback:**

### **Conclusion and research problem**

This chapter has examined how performance analysis has been used within the coaching process and how research has progressed from making models and formulae to building theoretical frameworks from evidence-based theories. The work of Groom et al. (2011) has provided a platform for other researchers to build upon to further enhance the knowledge and understanding of how performance analysis is utilised within the coaching process (see Bampouras et al., 2012; Francis & Jones 2014; Groom et al., 2012; Huggan et al., 2015; Wright et al., 2014). The literature review then became more focused and examined the research carried out into video-based feedback (see Booroff et al., 2016; Nelson et al., 2014; Taylor et al., 2017). All of these papers were then considered in terms of empirical and theoretical limitations, which would enable new ideas and approaches to be undertaken so that previous limitations were learnt from and avoided. By adopting an ethnographic approach to the research, the data would be collected ‘in situ’ as recommended by Groom et al. (2012) and the variety of qualitative methods being used to

study performance analysis, and in particular video-based feedback, would also be increased which would begin to address the issue highlighted by Mackenzie and Cushion (2013).

Once it had been established that the research study was going to investigate the interactions around video-based feedback sessions, theories were explored to see what could perhaps be utilised to understand these interactions. The use of Erving Goffman within sporting literature was then examined in more detail to highlight what had been used previously when trying to gain an understanding of the social aspects within the coaching process (Jones et al., 2002). It became apparent that '*Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*' (1959) and '*Interaction Ritual*' (1967) were used most frequently within the literature, but despite this there are parts of Goffman's '*Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*' (1959) work that has not been used before in sports literature, which shall be discussed in the rest of this section.

Much of the previous sports coaching literature has focused upon how an individual coach attempts to manage their impressions whilst in front of athletes and/or other members of staff (e.g. Consterdine et al., 2013; Jones, 2006; Nelson et al., 2013; Partington & Cushion, 2012). However, further thought and research could be dedicated towards how the coaching teams, of which the coach is a singular part, work together to portray themselves to athletes. This relates to Goffman's (1959) work, where he suggested that actors sometimes perform in teams where the individuals involved work together to control the information that gets passed onto the audience members (Goffman, 1959). In order to stop the audience acquiring destructive information "a team must be able to keep secrets and have secrets kept" (Goffman, 1959, p. 141). Goffman (1959) went on to discuss various kinds of secrets which include: *dark* (i.e. "facts about a team which it knows and conceals and which are incompatible with the image of self that the team attempts to maintain before its audience" p. 141), *strategic* (i.e. "intentions and capacities of a team which it conceals

from its audience in order to prevent them from adapting effectively to the state of affairs the team is planning to bring about" p. 141), *inside* (i.e. "ones whose possession marks an individual as being a member of a group and helps the group feel separate and different from those individuals who are not in the know" p. 142), *entrusted* (i.e. "the kind which the possessor is obliged to keep because of his relation to the team to which the secret refers" p. 143) and *free* ("somebody else's secret known to oneself that one could disclose without discrediting the image one was presenting of oneself" p. 143) secrets.

Furthermore, Goffman (1959) also discussed the different types of characters that can play a 'discrepant role' and what the meaning of that role is. For example, an *outsider* (i.e. they "know neither the secrets of the performance nor the appearance of reality fostered by it" and "are excluded from both [front and back] regions" Goffman, 1959, p. 144), an *informer* (i.e. "someone who pretends to the performers to be a member of their team, is allowed to come backstage and acquire destructive information, and then openly or secretly sells out the show to the audience" Goffman, 1959, p. 145), a *shill* (i.e. "someone who acts as though he were an ordinary member of the audience but is in fact in league with the performers" Goffman, 1959, p.145), a *go-between* (i.e. someone who "learns the secrets of each side and gives each side the true impression that he will keep its secrets; but he tends to give each side the false impression that he is more loyal to it than to the other" Goffman, 1959, p. 148) and *colleagues* (i.e. "persons who present the same routine to the same kind of audience but who do not participate together, as team-mates do, at the same time and place before the same particular audience" Goffman, 1959, p. 158-159). Additionally, Goffman (1959, p. 163) discusses *renegades*, who take a moral stand and "sell out to audience the secrets of the act that his one-time brethren are still performing" giving the reason that "it is better to be true to the ideals of the role than to the performers who falsely present themselves in it".

Finally, Goffman (1959) also explained that as well as the different discrepant roles that a person can bring into a social establishment, a team can treat an individual as if he is not there. This is:

a pointed way of expressing hostility to an individual who has conducted himself improperly. In such situations, the important show is to show the outcast that he is being ignored, and the activity that is carried on in order to demonstrate this may itself be of secondary importance (Goffman, 1959, p. 152).

By utilising the work of Goffman and in particular some of his ideas from '*Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*' (1959) which have not previously been implemented within sports coaching literature (e.g. how coaches work together as a team, how secrets might be used by individuals within the team and how different members of the team could adopt different discrepant roles) there is potential for gaining novel insights and understandings of how coaches work with other team members during their role.

## **Chapter 3 – Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter demonstrates how the overarching research questions of the thesis will be answered, by selecting and utilising the most appropriate methodological approach. The first section of the methodology provides the research origins of the present thesis, which demonstrate the need for the research and how this project came to fruition. In this section, the research funding and broad research objective are presented which frame the production of this thesis. Next, the importance of understanding the philosophy of science is illustrated to demonstrate the impact of different world views and conceptions of science on the research process in addressing the overarching research objectives. In the following section, aligned to research paradigms, methodological alternatives are reviewed demonstrating the underlying ontological (nature of reality) and epistemological (nature of knowledge) assumptions (e.g. postpositivism, interpretivism, critical theory and poststructuralism). This section concludes by outlining the paradigmatic and methodological choices taken within the present thesis to address the research questions posed (RQs 1-3). Building upon this, the next section identifies ethnography as the most appropriate methodological approach to address the research questions posed in the thesis. Therefore, a detail review of the different types and key characteristics of ethnographic work are presented. Following this, the participants, context and social structures within the sporting organisation are introduced. Next, key considerations for dealing with the corpus of qualitative data through the process of narrative data analysis are outlined. The penultimate section suggests a number of important considerations for readers to consider when judging the quality of the work within the thesis. Finally, the chapter concludes by providing a concise methodological overview.

### **3.2 Research origins**

This PhD was part of a match funded research programme between the English Institute of Sport (EIS) and Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), which was secured through an open tender process. The research objective set out at the start of the process by the EIS was to provide a more in-depth understanding of the use of video-based feedback with elite sports teams. This requirement framed the thesis and discussions regarding the research questions and ultimately shaped the entire research process. As this PhD was part-funded by the EIS, it is important to understand the work that they undertake and the service that they provide to various Olympic, Paralympic and a select number of non-Olympic sports. The EIS is funded by a grant from UK Sport for each 4-year cycle as well as income generated by providing services to sports' national governing bodies (NGBs) (UK Sport, 2018). The aim of the EIS is to help sports to "improve the performance of their athletes by delivering services which enable them to optimise training programmes, maximise performance in competition and improve the health and wellbeing" (English Institute of Sport, 2018). During the Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the EIS worked with 93% of the athletes and 31 out of 34 sports that won a medal for Team GB (English Institute of Sport, 2018).

As the EIS part-funded this PhD, I had the opportunity to gain practical experience as a performance analyst with various sports. When I first began this research project, I took various opportunities that were offered to me to travel to competitions with different sports to provide them with performance analysis support. Roughly 6 months into my PhD, a Paralympic sport got in touch with the EIS to inform them that their performance analyst was leaving and wondered if the EIS would be able to provide an individual to support them. Due to the nature of my research, the EIS offered the position to me after they had agreed with the sport that in return for my performance analysis services, I would be able to use them as participants within my PhD work. Therefore, as part of this project, I worked in a



dual role as a performance analyst and research student studying the use of performance analysis in practice. This work involved becoming fully immersed with the sport at training camps as well as travelling away with them to competitions.

### **3.3 The philosophy of science: The paradigm debate**

The questions and methods employed by a researcher are influenced by their paradigmatic choices and alignment, which are fundamental systems of beliefs (Morgan, 2007). Parry (2005, p. 29) states:

... that every working scientist will adopt procedures and attitudes which are derived, consciously or not, from some basic beliefs about the scientific enterprise. What philosophy of science tries to do is to get these basic commitments out into the open so that they can be rationally explained. To find oneself to have been committed to an incoherent view of one's own activity might be the beginning of important changes in one's scientific practice, attitudes and knowledge.

Therefore, it is important for the researcher to engage with both philosophical and methodological debate to enhance the quality of the research being undertaken (Seale, 1999; Weed, 2010). Furthermore, by explicitly discussing the philosophical views that have shaped the current thesis, my aim is to assist the reader with a better understanding of how to interpret the research process and findings presented (Creswell, 2009; Krane & Baird, 2005). Philosophical views can shape the researchers' decisions regarding research methods, design and selection of approaches of inquiry (Morgan, 2007). These decisions are connected to the ontology (what is the nature of reality?), epistemology (what is the relationship between the researcher and the known?) and methodology (how do we gain knowledge of

the social world?) of each philosophical perspective (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Indeed, given the applied nature of the thesis philosophical issues are important because they drive what constitute 'knowledge' towards addressing the research objective and research questions posed.

Much of the research in sport settings has been guided by either positivist or constructivist/interpretivist frameworks, although these frameworks are now expanding to also include paradigms such as critical theory, post-positivism and post-modernism (Armour & MacDonald, 2012; Nelson et al., 2014). Since 2009, there has been an increasing adoption of interpretivist approaches within the sports coaching literature (see Nelson et al., 2013; Nelson et al., 2014; Potrac & Jones, 2009b; Toner, Nelson, Potrac, Gilbourne & Marshall, 2012), as a positivist position would limit the understanding of the topic by "generating nomothetic and lawlike accounts of actions that can be used to make future predictions" (Potrac, Jones & Nelson, 2014, p. 32). The ontology, epistemology, methodology and interests of the positivist, interpretivist, critical theory and poststructuralist approaches are discussed in the following sections.

### 3.3.1 Positivism

Positivism has a long and illustrious history as a philosophy (Sparkes, 1992). Giddens (1974, p. 3) suggests that,

... positivism in philosophy, in some sense revolves around the contention, or implicit assumption, that the notions and statements of science constitute a framework by reference to which the nature of any form of knowledge may be determined. Positivism in sociology may be broadly represented as depending upon the assertion that the concepts and methods employed by

the natural sciences can be applied to form a 'science of man', or a 'natural science of society'.

The ontological nature of the positivist paradigm is known as realism, which is the belief that "the social world external to individual cognition is a real world made up of hard, tangible and relatively immutable facts that can be observed, measured and known for what they really are" (Sparkes, 1992, p. 20). The epistemology within this paradigm is objective and as such "researchers should only value scientific rigor and not its impact on society or research subjects" (Lincoln et al., 2011, p. 103). Therefore, it was suggested that people operating within this positivistic framework believe the best way to explore the social world they are investigating is by using experimental methods or techniques, which are usually associated with the natural sciences (Sparkes, 1992; Uehara, Button, Falcous & Davids, 2016). A positivistic approach would commonly advocate the use of quantitative research methods because the objective reality of the social world is closely related to the captured 'observables' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Shadish, 1995). By adopting these types of research methods, the data that is produced can be replicated and proven by other researchers, thus reinforcing the belief of a single objective reality (Lincoln et al., 2011; Weed, 2009).

For a positivist to achieve an unbiased and detached stance, it is important to manage any potential sources of subjective researcher bias by controlling unwanted interference (Sparkes, 1992; Uehara et al., 2016). Sparkes (1992, p. 22) suggests that, "therefore, within the positivistic framework a manipulative methodology is adopted which attempts to control both researcher bias and other external variables in the environment so that nature's secrets can be revealed for what they are". Furthermore, to achieve objectivity, positivists adhere to specific methods within a formal process often referred to as the scientific method (Lincoln et al., 2011; Sparkes, 1992). These methods often prevent the intrusion of the researcher's subjectivity which allow for valid claims and statements to be

made, safe in the knowledge that they have developed from firm foundations (Lincoln et al., 2011; Sparkes, 1992).

Some examples of research within sports coaching that has been conducted under the positivist paradigm include topics such as the coach-athlete relationship (see Jowett & Chaundy, 2004; Jowett & Meek, 2000; Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004) and coaching behaviours (see Kahan, 1999; Smith, Smoll & Hunt, 1977; Smith, Shoda, Cumming & Smoll, 2009; Smith & Smoll, 2011; Smoll & Smith, 1989).

### 3.3.2 Interpretivism

Alternatively, an interpretivist approach would contest a positivistic view of causal relationships and universal laws as a result of believing that there are multiple social realities (Coldwell & Simkins, 2011). The key to interpretive research is to understand the experiences of the individuals and group being investigated (Coe, 2012). An interpretivist approach assumes that the world is constructed by the actors engaged within it and the research process should aim to uncover the different meanings that individuals attach to certain stimuli, typically achieved through qualitative methods (Armour & MacDonald, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Weed, 2009).

An interpretivist would have a relativist ontological viewpoint, which is the belief that “realities exist in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experimentally based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them” (Guba, 1990, p. 27). Lincoln et al. (2011, p. 103) explained that “this means we construct knowledge through our lived experiences and through our interactions with other members of society”. Consequently, the researcher “must participate in the research project with the subjects to ensure we are producing knowledge that is reflective of their reality”

(Lincoln et al., 2011, p. 103). The epistemology within this paradigm is subjective, and therefore the findings are the creation of the researcher and the subject through the interactions that they have with each other (Guba, 1990, 1996). As a result, Lincoln et al. (2011, p. 104) stated that “we are shaped by our lived experiences, and these will always come out in the knowledge we generate as researchers and in the data generated by our subjects”.

Sparkes (1992) commented that interpretive researchers can see how a positivist approach would be appropriate for the study of the physical world, however, it is argued that this approach would not be appropriate for the study of the social world, because the physical and social world have different characteristics. An interpretivist approach cannot see the world outside of their position within it; all that an interpretivist can see are different points of view that reflect the interests, values and purposes of various groups of people (Sparkes, 1992). With this in mind, “interpretivists focus on the interests and purposes of people, on their intentional and meaningful behaviour, then by attempting to construe the world from the participant’s point of view they try to explain and understand how they construct and continue to reconstruct social reality, given their interests and purposes” (Sparkes, 1992, p. 27). The methodology that tends to be adopted within the interpretive paradigm is known as hermeneutics (Guba, 1996). Lincoln et al. (2011, p. 105) explained that a hermeneutical cycle is when “actions lead to collection of data, which leads to interpretation of data which spurs action based on data”. In order to undertake interpretive research, typically qualitative methods are adopted, particularly interviewing and observing the participants (Angen, 2000).

Some of the research that has begun to adopt an interpretivist approach within the sports coaching discipline includes: Jones et al. (2003); Jones and Wallace (2005); Nelson et

al. (2013); Nelson et al. (2014); Potrac and Jones (2009b); Potrac, Jones, Gilbourne and Nelson (2013); Purdy and Jones (2011) and Toner et al. (2012).

### 3.3.3 Critical theory

As with the other two theories, there are many strands within the critical framework. However, the central intention of critical theory is emancipation; this enables people to gain the knowledge and power to be in control of their own lives (Sparkes, 1992). Carr and Kemmis (1986, p. 103) contested that a positivistic approach offers no way of effecting a practical change as it fails “to recognize the importance of the interpretations and meanings that individuals employ to make their reality intelligible, fail to identify the phenomena to be explained. In consequence, the kind of theories that they produce are often trivial and useless, even though they may appear to be sophisticated and elaborate”.

There are more similarities between the interpretivist and critical theory approaches, but a critical theorist would say that whilst interpretivists understand how people behave in a gym or on sports field, it tends to do so in a social and cultural vacuum without economic, political or social influences from the wider society (Sparkes, 1992). Therefore, the fundamental difference between these two approaches is that a critical theorist would also consider how the individuals being investigated are shaped by particular social and organisational relations, structures and conditions (Sparkes, 1992). A researcher adopting a critical theory approach within their work would consider the unequal power relations in certain communities, which could have derived from such issues as social class, gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, disability etc. (Sparkes, 1992). Griffin (1990, p. 2) summarised some of the beliefs that are inherent to a critical perspective, three of which are listed below:

1. The role of the critical perspective is to bring the contradictions between apparent harmony/consensus and conflict/tension to light, to 'problematize' the status quo.
2. A critical perspective is concerned with 'why/why not' questions and is critical of 'how' questions that do not consider 'why' (whose interests are served?). The intention is to change the world, not describe it.
3. A critical perspective believes in the importance of changing individual and group consciousness in creating social change.

In order to adhere to these beliefs, Sparkes (1992, p. 42) states that, "explicit interests and values are substituted for explicit ones and the researcher disclaims any notions of 'value neutrality' since the aim is to challenge the status quo and contribute to a more egalitarian social order".

Once again, within sports coaching some examples of research that has adopted a critical theorist approach include studies of under-represented groups, such as black, female or gay coaches (see Norman, 2008; 2010a; 2010b; 2012; 2013a; 2013b; Rankin-Wright, Hylton & Norman, 2016; 2017; Reade, Rodgers & Norman, 2009).

### 3.3.4 Poststructuralism

Undertaking a research study from a poststructuralist perspective is well suited when the aim of the project is to understand and problematize dominant discourses within a particular research area (Avner, Jones & Denison, 2014; Taylor et al., 2017). This is because the ontology behind the paradigm is participative reality, which was explained by Guba and Lincoln (2005, p. 195) as being "subjective-objective reality, co-created by mind and the surrounding cosmos". Heshusius (1994, p. 15) explained that the epistemology behind the

perspective is holistic as it “replaces traditional relation between ‘truth’ and ‘interpretation’ in which the idea of truth antedates the idea of interpretation”. Furthermore, Guba and Lincoln (2005, p. 195) described the epistemology within poststructuralism as “critical subjectivity in participatory transaction with cosmos; extended epistemology of experiential, propositional, and practical knowing”. As a result, any findings from the research would be co-created between the researcher and the subject (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). The methodology adopted within this paradigm is to use deconstruction as a tool for questioning, but both the method and content could be viewed as co-created as the researcher and subject engage in a democratic dialogue (Heron & Reason, 1997).

Markula and Silk (2011) suggested that a poststructuralist approach seeks to bring about social change by recognising that research is both a reflexive and political act. Therefore, a poststructuralist inquiry is “particularly interested in the formation of current power relations and often critiques how discourses are used for dominance” with the aim of generating change (Markula & Silk, 2011, p. 52). Within sports coaching literature, the work of Taylor et al. (2017, p. 116) explained how a “poststructuralist position rejects and directly contests positivistic understandings of sport and those sporting practices that serve to promote docility”. Consequently, it was used within their work on video-based coaching as a “disruptive and deconstructive lens” that aimed to create “a reflexive space” to think about the discipline in a more critical and ethical way (Taylor et al., 2017, p. 116). As well as Taylor et al. (2017), other sports coaching researchers have adopted a poststructuralist approach (e.g. Denison 2007, 2010, 2011; Denison & Avner, 2011; Gearity & Mills, 2013; Lang 2010; Shogan, 2007) and they have tended to draw primarily on the work of Foucault “in order to develop pragmatic interventions to help coaches become more effective” (Avner et al., 2014, p. 42).



### 3.3.5 Section summary

As the previous sections highlighted, there are a number of research paradigms that could be employed to address different types of research questions with different research objectives. Each of these paradigms are underpinned by alternative views of the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the enquirer and what can be known (epistemology), the goal of inquiry, what is valued, the use of theory, issues regarding the representation of participants within the research process, the role of the researcher, and considerations for judging the quality of inquiry. Table 1 provides a concise overview of these contrasting views, and illustrates that the paradigmatic choices of the present thesis are underpinned by interpretivism, in that, addressing the research questions posed in this thesis is primarily concerned with knowledge grounded in individual perception of the use of video-based feedback (epistemology position), with the principle aim of understanding individual's socially constructed reality (ontology position). The following section will outline how paradigmatic assumptions are important in selecting an appropriate research methodology to address the overarching research objective of the thesis and the specific research questions posed (RQs 1-3).

**Table 1. Foundational positions and assumptions of contemporary epistemological paradigms (adapted from Krane & Baird, 2005, p. 90)**

<b>Epistemological Paradigm</b>	<b>Nature of Knowledge</b>	<b>Goal of Inquiry</b>	<b>Role of Values</b>	<b>Role of Theory</b>	<b>Voice Represented</b>	<b>Researcher Role</b>	<b>Legitimacy Criteria</b>
Positivism	Observable, empirical, quantifiable Verifiable	Prediction & explanation Hypothesis testing	Unbiased, objective	Theory testing Deductive	Researcher	“Disinterested scientist”	Internal & external validity
Interpretivism	Reality grounded in individual perceptions Hermeneutic (“whole” and “part” interconnected)	Understand individual perceptions and social reality	Researcher brackets values Values inherent in social norms	Hermeneutic (connect part and whole)	Participant dominant	“Disinterested observer” (bracketing of a priori knowledge)	Trustworthiness Authenticity
Critical Theory	Multiple realities Situated knowledge (socially and historically bound)	Empowerment Emancipation	Openly ideological (social critique)	Social criticism	Mixed participant and researcher	“Transformative intellectual” (advocate and activist)	Ability to prompt social change Historical situatedness Accountability
Post-structuralism	No universal truth	Deconstruction	Reflexively consider	No universal truth or “grand narratives”	Multiplicity of voices	Theoretical expert Aesthetic critic	Reflexivity Aesthetic appeal (rhetorical criteria) Transgressive (disrupt status quo)

### 3.4 Methodological and paradigmatic choice

Having outlined the different research paradigms, it is important to know how these paradigms can affect the methodological approach. Krane and Baird (2005) highlighted that there are connections between the epistemology, methodology and methods within each research investigation. Additionally, Krane and Baird (2005, p. 89) add that “through methodology, researchers may assess why particular methods are used, the value of the method, its impact on participants, and the relationship between the data collecting process and the product of those data”.

The work of Letherby (2003) distinguished between method, methodology and epistemology as:

- *Method* – a tool or technique for gathering data.
- *Methodology* – provides a framework for analysing and evaluating the process of research.
- *Epistemology* – provides the foundation for methodology and is a theory of knowledge, or consideration of what is legitimate knowledge.

Furthermore, Krane and Baird (2005, p. 89) explain that, “epistemological or methodological approaches cannot be intermingled capriciously (i.e. different perspectives may have contradictory premises, such as postmodern and naturalistic views)”, but it is possible to utilise the same methods within different epistemologies or methodologies even though the methods will have different epistemological beliefs underpinning them (Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

### 3.4.1 Thesis epistemology and methodology

Given the research objectives of the thesis, the research questions posed and the paradigmatic commitments of interpretivism, ethnography was selected as an appropriate methodological choice. However, Cushion (2014) highlights that before considering the process of ethnography, it is important to evaluate the epistemological and methodological underpinnings of the research. Whilst the epistemology and methodology of ethnography may vary, it is fundamentally non-positivist (Krane & Baird, 2005). Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) explain how ethnography is inductive, historically and situationally bound, and realises the influence of the researcher on the work they carry out. Ethnographic work is built on the premise that there are multiple truths and ways of seeing and interpreting things (Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2000). Ethnographic work acknowledges that each person socially constructs, interprets and reacts to social settings in different ways; meaning that two people may interpret the same situation differently (Krane & Baird, 2005). The primary goal of ethnographic work is to understand the social setting through the perspective(s) of the participants; therefore, the world must be viewed through their eyes (Krane & Baird, 2005).

Using hypotheses during ethnographic work becomes problematic because they guide the researcher to examine a specific area that might not be of interest or relevance to the community or groups being investigated (Krane & Baird, 2005). Consequently, when undertaking an ethnographic study, the researcher should have a general idea of the topic they want to investigate, but precise research questions may not initially exist. These research questions can be developed as more is learnt about the setting through observations, meaning that ethnographic work is often inductive or emergent in nature (Krane & Baird, 2005; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Despite the nature of ethnographic work, the use of theory is important to help focus the initial observations, identify essential data, and direct interviews (Frow & Morris, 2000). Furthermore, qualitative research should be

grounded in a theoretical framework so that you are able to observe, interpret, record and analyse the different social settings (Wolcott, 1995). Smith and Deemer (2000) suggested that a researcher cannot separate the description of phenomena from interpretation, and therefore, observations cannot be carried out theory-free.

With regards to this particular project, the researcher knew the overarching research objective of the investigation (RO to provide a more in-depth understanding of the use of video-based feedback with elite sports teams), but, the specific research questions were not set before the initial observations and immersion within the sport had begun. Following the first 2-5 observations with the sport and a firmer understanding of my role within the sport as a performance analyst, and in particular, the types of day-to-day interactions that occurred, three interrelated research questions were developed to provide a more in-depth understanding of the use of video-based feedback within the sport.

The following section outlines, in detail, some of the key characteristics of ethnographic research, the value of ethnographic research in studying the social world, different types of ethnographic research, data collection techniques, and procedures and processes involved in ethnographic research.

### **3.5 Ethnography**

#### **3.5.1 What is ethnography?**

The origins of ethnography can be traced back to nineteenth-century Western anthropology, where the term was used for descriptive accounts of a community or culture (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). There is not a definitive explanation for the term and this could be because it is used in different ways on different occasions (Cushion, 2014; Gratton & Jones, 2004; Hammersley, 2006). However, ethnography has been described as both a

process and a product (Tedlock, 2000; Wolcott, 1990), a tool (MacPhail, 2004) and an umbrella term (Krane & Baird, 2005). Additionally, Atkinson (2012, p. 24) suggested that “ethnography is the study of human group life via a researcher’s immersion in a particular social group, (sub)culture, scene or cultural setting of interest”. Despite not always having a clear definition, there are some basic constituents that make up ethnographic work, such as spending a prolonged period of time immersed within the context (Atkinson, 2012; Cushion, 2014; MacPhail, 2004).

Within this work, the suggestion by Atkinson and Hammersley (1994) about ethnography will be adopted. Their suggestion was that ethnography refers “primarily to a particular method or set of methods. In its most characteristic form, it involves the ethnographer participating, overtly or covertly, in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions – in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research” (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994, p. 1). Therefore, the term ethnography refers to a set of methods comprising of various components, such as participant observation, compiling field notes and conducting interviews which will all be discussed later on within this section (Krane & Baird, 2005).

By adopting ethnographic methods, this work will offer an alternative perspective from the previous reliance on a singular methodological approach, such as interview-based research (Culver, Gilbert & Trudel, 2003; Cushion, 2014). Whilst acknowledging that there has already been an increase in the use of ethnographic (see Christensen, Laursen & Sorensen, 2011; Cushion & Jones, 2006, 2014; MacPhail, Gorely & Kirk, 2003), or auto-ethnographic (see Jones, 2006, 2009; Potrac et al., 2013; Purdy et al., 2008), research since the call for methodological diversity, it is argued that adopting this type of approach would allow for a comprehensive awareness and understanding of the participants’ experiences

and the context in which they occurred (Krane & Baird, 2005). Furthermore, it enables ‘thick’ descriptions of social practices to be shared rather than the “arguably ‘thin’, one-off cross-sectional interview research” that has been conducted previously (Cushion, 2014, p. 171).

Additionally, Cushion (2014) suggested that undertaking ethnographic work within sports coaching enables the researcher to have direct contact and observation with the coaches, players and other stakeholders. There are three benefits of having these types of interactions with the participants, which are outlined below (Cushion, 2014, p. 175):

1. The researcher is better able to understand the context within which the coaching process operates. Understanding the context and its inherent process is essential to gaining a holistic perspective.
2. Observational fieldwork offers the opportunity to see things that may routinely escape conscious awareness among participants.
3. Direct observation allows the researcher to learn things about the coaching process, as well as coach and player behaviours, which participants may have been unwilling to talk about in interviews.

Whilst Cushion (2014) identifies these advantages as being associated with the coaching process, they can equally be attributed to the application of video-based feedback. By adopting an ethnographic approach, this research will be able to better understand the context within which video-based feedback is delivered from a holistic perspective. The observational work will offer the researcher the opportunity to see things that the participants may not be aware of and to learn things about the different ways video-based feedback is delivered within different sports (Cushion, 2014).

However, there are also some potential limitations with adopting an ethnographic approach that should be considered before it can be applied. Firstly, Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) noted the danger of developing an 'over-rapport' with the participants. Cushion (2014) explained how he had experienced this particular phenomenon during his experiences of ethnographic work, and how due to his association with the coaches that the players viewed him as 'one of them'. Consequently, this could impact upon the players' attitudes towards him. Another example of 'over-rapport' is when the researcher "could over-identify with the respondents' perspectives", which could lead to a "biased view becoming a prejudiced one" (Cushion, 2014, p. 177).

Additionally, the work of Giulianotti (1995) discussed the risks of 'going native', which is when the researcher takes on the beliefs and values of the group and perhaps selects data that portrays them in a more positive light. However, Purdy and Jones (2013) highlighted that the relationships that are formed with the participants will undoubtedly influence the interactions that they have with each other and subsequently the information shared with the researcher. Therefore, it could be argued that without becoming a native and accepted within the specific context under investigation, the adopted methodological approach being undertaken cannot be described as ethnographic, as this was a recurring constituent aspect when describing ethnographic work (see Atkinson, 2012; Cushion, 2014; MacPhail, 2004).

The main reason for adopting ethnographic methods for this research is that allows the researcher to witness and capture the routine and everyday activities of the participants at a particular site, whilst uncovering the hierarchy and different roles within it (MacPhail, 2004). Furthermore, the research will endeavour to understand the meaning of the activities and interactions from the perspective of the participants and will then go beyond surface appearances to produce a 'thick' description of the social practices witnessed (Cushion,



2014; MacPhail, 2004). Ethnography is well suited for investigating sport settings, as it will culminate in a textual account of the culture of a specific social group, by adopting a combination of research activities (Cushion, 2014; Krane & Baird, 2005). It is important to note that sport in general has its own culture, and within this larger culture each type of sport, whether team or individual, will have its own unique culture that can be represented through ethnographic work in the final textual account (Cushion, 2014; Krane & Baird, 2005).

Within the interpretive paradigm, a naturalistic methodology will add to existing knowledge about the topic being investigated in context, in this case video-based feedback sessions (Cushion, 2014). By providing an insight into the interactions and complexity of a video-based feedback session in situ, the understanding of the topic being explored will be furthered. An ethnographic approach will provide a set of methods that highlight “the problematic, interrelated and interdependent nature of relationships” that occur during, and influence, a video-based feedback session (Cushion, 2014, p. 178). Finally, by utilising an ethnographic approach, the complex social interactions that occur during the course of the investigation will not be reduced to statistical calculations and results (Cushion, 2014).

### 3.5.2 Different types of ethnography

The term ethnography has been used quite loosely within research to describe any qualitative research that uses observation of participants to provide an inductive and detailed description of everyday life for the group (Atkinson, 2012). However, there are many different types of ethnographic modes of inquiry that a researcher could adopt, including (but not restricted to): analytic ethnography, audience ethnography, auto-ethnography, critical ethnography, institutional ethnography, netnography, realist ethnography, sensory ethnography and performance ethnography (Atkinson, 2012). Some of these different types of ethnographic approaches will be explained in the following section.

Firstly, realist ethnographers believe that to best understand, gain knowledge and explain how a culture functions, you must become a member of that culture to experience direct contact with its members over time (Atkinson, 2012). Atkinson (2012, p. 25-26) states that “the epistemology [for realist ethnography] is straightforward; one becomes a member of a cultural group, does what they do, travels with them and lives alongside them as a means of achieving intersubjectivity with them”. After this immersion within the culture the researcher should feel confident enough to provide an interpretivist account (often written) of the culture that accurately represents its core values, structures, processes and participants (Atkinson, 2012). Frequently, to aid with the written account, members of the culture are interviewed to deepen the researcher’s understanding of the group and its members by collecting some life history data about them (Atkinson, 2012). These interviews also provide an environment for focused data collection by asking identified key informants specific but open-ended questions; Atkinson (2012) emphasises that the person being interviewed is allowed to answer each question without being limited by pre-defined choices to ensure that the research does not become quantitative.

Atkinson (2012, p. 29) highlighted that because of an increased “scepticism regarding an ethnographer’s ability to merely represent the ‘objective’ aspects of social/cultural life via a textual account of others”, there was change in the type of ethnographic work being undertaken. It was argued that a realist approach fails to account for the researcher becoming a part of the social world that they are studying and, therefore, the research lacks reflexivity that is an aspect of all social research (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007). Atkinson (2015, p.26) explains that reflexivity is an essential aspect of social research because as researchers “we actively engage with and explore the social world, and that in doing so we – to some extent – co-construct it in collaboration with the people we observe, talk to, listen to and otherwise engage with”. Consequently, the lack of recognition given to

reflexivity within a realist approach is a limitation that would need to be addressed before adopting this approach.

Secondly, auto-ethnographic methods have become increasingly popular within sport, physical activity and health studies (Atkinson, 2012). This is because of dissatisfaction with other ethnographic approaches in which the researcher's voice is either lacking or absent within the story (Gearity, 2014). Auto-ethnographic methods involve the researcher developing questions about a particular social process, experience or reality and then creating a description and analysis of their own behaviour (Atkinson, 2012). Auto-ethnographies are often deeply personal and emotional in their written form as part of the logic is to open up and personalise the research in order to help readers connect with academic arguments, theories and ideas (Atkinson, 2012). For example, the work of Purdy et al. (2008) utilises journal entries and stories of the principal researcher that discuss the changing relationship and dynamic between herself, as a rowing coxswain, and a new coach in preparation for a national rowing championship. Other examples of auto-ethnographic work within sports coaching include the work of Jones (2006), McMahon, McGannon and Zehntner (2017) and Potrac et al. (2013). Again, the authors provide a story, or stories, from their experiences in the environment and a theoretical reading in order to interpret what occurred.

Critical ethnography falls within conventional ethnography; however, it has a particular style of analysis and discourse, which usually has a political purpose (Thomas, 1993). Many of the fundamental characteristics are the same, but there are also some that help to distinguish the two from each other; for example, ethnography describes a particular culture, whilst critical ethnography studies a culture to change it (Thomas, 1993). Due to the nature of critical ethnography, it often involves the study or investigation of oppressed or marginalised groups within society, with the researcher aiming to negate some of the

repressive influences and address the unfairness and injustices faced by a particular community (Madison, 2012; Thomas, 1993). A critical ethnographer aims to disrupt the status quo and resists domestication to move from describing 'what is' to 'what could be' (Carspecken, 1996; Denzin, 2001; Madison, 2012; Thomas, 1993).

The work of Lofland (1995) was the first to refer to 'analytic ethnography'; this type of ethnography seeks to "develop systematic and generic understandings and propositions about social processes" (Snow, Morrill & Anderson, 2003, p. 181). This contrasts the more traditional interpretive style of ethnography that attempts to get at the bottom of what is going on in a particular culture or setting (Snow et al., 2003).

Whilst there are many different forms of ethnography that a researcher can select for their investigation, "the epistemological core of the approach remains somewhat constant" across all forms (Atkinson, 2012, p. 32). Ethnographers believe that theorising is best accomplished by having a sustained engagement with the participants, rather than applying theoretical assumptions about meanings and experiences of cultural case studies before the researcher has engaged with the community and its members (Atkinson, 2012). Finally, by being present and witnessing the day to day activities, a researcher is better able to translate the socio-cultural knowledge of the particular community in their final written account (Atkinson, 2012).

### 3.5.3 The use of ethnography

The aim of ethnographic research is to understand the culture of a particular group from the perspective of the group members (Tedlock 2000; Wolcott 1995) and, therefore, the researcher is embedded within the setting over a prolonged period of time (Cushion, 2014). Cushion (2014, p. 172) highlights the importance of this immersion into the setting as it "enables the capturing of routine everyday activity of participants, the hierarchies

involved, understanding the meaning of activities from the participants' point of view, and going beyond thin surface appearances to produce 'thick' description". This regular and prolonged contact within a particular setting or context is an expectation of ethnographic work, as it allows the researcher to recognise routines and repeating practices as well as the complex patterns which occur in social situations (Atkinson, 2012; Cushion, 2014; MacPhail, 2004).

Due to ethnographic research being a person-based investigation Bishop (1999) argued that who you are matters to your informants. Additionally, Declercq (2000) suggested that to some extent the success of the research might depend on how well the researcher successfully builds a personal and trusting relationship with the participants. By immersing oneself in a particular setting for a prolonged period of time, the researcher becomes an insider, which is "instrumental to understanding and accurately describing situations and behaviours ... and is crucial to an understanding of why people think and act in the different ways they do" (Fetterman, 1989, p. 30). Furthermore, this time within a context allows the researcher to build a rapport with the participants and to grasp an understanding of any unique language used by the participants within the setting (Cushion & Jones, 2006; 2014). Building a rapport with the participants could allow the researcher access to conversations that would perhaps be missed if a 'snap shot' approach had been adopted (MacPhail, 2004).

Due to the aims of an ethnographic study, research projects that utilise this approach tend to employ multiple methods, such as participant observation and interviewing, but can also include text, photographs, or questionnaire data; by adopting these multiple methods, researchers are able to record individual meanings given to specific activities that were witnessed (Krane & Baird, 2005). Fieldwork remains the central methodology in ethnography and involves some form of observation (Cushion, 2014). There is no substitute for direct experience through participant observation, therefore the importance of the researcher's

self as 'human instrument' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) is consistently highlighted throughout the literature (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, MacPhail, 2004).

During observations, comprehensive field notes and transcripts from audio recordings are produced, which provide key bits of information including: date, where the observation occurred, who was present, what the physical setting was, what social interactions occurred and what activities took place (Cushion, 2014). It is the field notes that provide the focus and basis for further data collection and additional methods and when added together, these diverse sources of information give a fuller picture of the wider context being investigated (Cushion, 2014).

Hammersley (2006) debates whether interviewing should be viewed as an integral part of ethnographic work. Historically, it has always been a part of what ethnographers do, but more recently an increasing amount of work has relied heavily upon interviews and been described as ethnographic. Previous research that has had an exclusive reliance upon interview data, no matter what questions are asked of the participant(s), it cannot be viewed as ethnographic because ethnographic work has always involved participant observation (Hammersley, 2006). However, the other opinion is that ethnographic work is about capturing the different perspectives of the participants; therefore, it could be argued that interviews are a particularly effective way to investigate these perspectives (Hammersley, 2006). Most ethnographic work often places an emphasis on the importance of interpreting what people say in the context of their personal experiences and this information can only be accessed through interviews or elicited documents (Hammersley, 2006).

Hammersley (2006) discussed some of the doubts that have been expressed involving the interview data and how it has been used by ethnographers and other social

researchers. The work states that there are two standard uses of interviews (Hammersley, 2006, p. 9):

1. As a source of witness accounts about settings and events in the social world, that the ethnographer may or may not have been able to observe her or himself; and
2. As supplying evidence about informants' general perspectives or attitudes: inferences being made about these from what people say and do in the interview situation.

There are two directions this critique of interviews can lead to. Firstly, that ethnographic research should be restricted to observational data collected from natural environments, which would rule out the use of interviews altogether (Hammersley, 2006). Secondly, interviews are used but only to explore the strategies and resources of the environment (Hammersley, 2006). However, Hammersley (2006, p. 10) states that:

neither of these two options is true to the spirit of ethnography, it seems to me. The first either ignores the traditional ethnographic commitment to understanding people's perspectives, or assumes that these can be inferred from observed behaviour. The second strategy abandons the sorts of inference usually applied to interview data by ethnographers, and undermines the links that ethnographers typically make between interview and observational data, for example, in terms of a contrast between what people say and what they actually do.

Whilst Hammersley (2006) highlighted that there might still debate about certain aspects of ethnographic work, this particular piece of research will utilise participant observations and field notes, and themes arising from this work can then be further explored with the participants during individual interviews.

As ethnographic work is made up of various data collection methods, the ones utilised within this study are explained below.

#### 3.5.4 Participant observation

Participant observation is often referred to as the main method of data collection within ethnographic studies, and Adler and Adler (1994) suggested that the fundamental base of research methods within social sciences is observation. Furthermore, as stated by Cushion (2014, p. 174), “participant observation is an 'omnibus field strategy' (Patton, 1990, p. 206) in that it 'simultaneously combines interviewing of respondents and informants, direct participant observation and introspection' (Denzin, 1978, p. 183)”.

The importance of participant observation is a frequent occurrence within the literature (see Atkinson, 2012; Ely, 1991; Hammersley, 2006; Krane & Baird, 2005; MacPhail, 2004; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998), particularly the use of the researcher as a 'human instrument' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Being in the field and developing a relatively long-term relationship with the participants in their natural setting will aid the researcher's understanding of that environment (Lofland & Lofland, 1984).

When undertaking participant observation, there are various stances and approaches that a researcher can adopt, these range from pure observation through to pure participation (Atkinson, 2012; Brewer, 2000; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Krane & Baird, 2005). At the pure observation end, the researcher would observe the group activities from an objective perspective, whilst on the other hand a pure participant would be a member of the social group and not necessarily inform them that they were a researcher (Krane & Baird, 2005). By adopting this more covert stance, the researcher is likely to learn about the true inner workings of the social group, but there are ethical issues around participant deception with using this approach (Krane & Baird, 2005). There is obviously a range within these two descriptions to describe how involved or removed from the social group the researcher is.



Within this project, the role I played could be described as a participant observer, which Krane and Baird (2005, p. 95) explained as someone who participates “in the daily activities of the social group while conducting observations”. This role requires the researcher to do their best to fit into the setting that they are investigating, but the participants are aware that they are a researcher (Krane & Baird, 2005).

To begin with the observer’s presence might be disruptive for the participants, but it has been agreed that after a while it ceases to be novel enough to be a disturbance (Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2000). Furthermore, in the early stages of observations the researcher may wish to remain neutral and non-committal when asked for an opinion to secure a long-term acceptance within the group (Cushion, 2014). However, by interacting with the participants the researcher is able to build a good rapport with them and become someone who is trusted (Cushion, 2014).

Despite the various different options and stances of participant observation, the aim of all them is to describe the setting, activities that occur, the people that participate within them and the meanings of what was observed from the participants’ perspective (Cushion, 2014). Developing relationships with coaches, players and other key stakeholders within the observed environment enables the researcher to better understand the context and the activities that occur, which is a key aspect when trying to gain a holistic perspective (Cushion, 2014). Furthermore, witnessing the activities and behaviours of the players and coaches allows the researcher to learn more about the topic under investigation, particularly aspects that may not have come up naturally within an interview if the environment had not previously been observed (Cushion, 2014). Additionally, Cushion and Jones (2014) highlighted that the observations may raise topics that participants would have been unwilling to talk about, or even contradict within an interview, and as the relationships have been developed these areas might become easier to talk about for the participants.

Finally, the number of observations that occur clearly depend upon each individual environment being investigated as this could alter within different sports considering how frequently training sessions, games or competitions occur (Cushion, 2014). However, when these observations do occur Cushion (2014) highlights that keeping written field notes about the observations is important and therefore the following section shall explore this task in more detail.

My introduction to the context under investigation came through an initial conversation with the sports Performance Director arranged by Julia (Wells) at the EIS. An opportunity had presented itself for me to work with a squad as the main analyst, rather than be a peripheral figure collecting data as an outsider. The existing analyst with the squad had decided to move to a new role within the sport, and the coaching staff were keen to have this role filled. Following a phone conversation with the Performance Director, I attended a training camp and was introduced to the coaches, players and support staff of the team. Initially, on my first day with the team, I shadowed the out-going performance analyst at a training camp to observe his day-to-day roles and how to use the equipment required to support the coaches and players. However, at my next training camp I was operating as the performance analyst alone. This included filming and live coding matches for the team. This allowed me to quickly become part of the group, with an important role that required the players and coaches to come to me and discuss role-related requirements. Over the next few training camps, I became an integrated member of the team, I participated in the day-to-day activities of the squad, which enabled me to develop a rapport with both the coaching staff and players. As I became a more trusted member of the team, I was increasingly involved in the daily activities which enabled me to observe the interactions between the coaches and players during training sessions, and also video-based feedback sessions. Furthermore, as I had an increased involvement with the team I was able to better understand the context that I was investigating, which assisted in trying to gain a holistic

perspective of the research environment. These observations were recorded as part of the field notes, so that they could be used when constructing the findings (see Appendix B).

### 3.5.5 Field notes

Field notes are a symbol for ethnographers, with the stereotypical image of a fieldworker with a pen and notebook observing a ritual of a particular tribe (Sands, 2002). And whilst technology has advanced, field notes documenting what was observed and experienced remain at the core of carrying out ethnographic research (Sands, 2002). Field notes can be made up of various scraps of paper that provide a description about a specific event, but Sanjek (1990) suggests that to accurately record a culture, an enormous amount of scratch notes are required, as well as a magical touch to keep these notes in some sense of order. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) suggest that it is not possible to capture everything within field notes and the researcher must be selective. The focus and detail of these notes will depend upon what is relevant for the particular research problem and questions being investigated, as well as any background expectations (Wolfinger, 2002). Therefore, when the research begins the notes might take a fairly wide scope, but as the research develops the focus and detail being recorded within the field notes may become more concentrated as particular emergent issues are identified within the research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) discuss the question of when to take field notes during participant observation. The ideal point would be during actual participant observation, but this is not always possible due to the researcher's role within the field, therefore, the notes should be written down as soon as possible afterwards, because over time the detail is lost, and sessions can become muddled, which reduces the quality of the notes (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Sands (2002) commented that during some of his

research he has recorded scratch notes on the back of a competitor's entry number, or even athletic tape in order to jot down particular observations. Furthermore, even events that the researcher might not immediately understand should be recorded, as these events may turn out to be important at a later date (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

The field notes should be written up daily to expand upon and develop the context and memory of what was observed or felt during the specific event noted (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Whilst personal diaries and journals are not field notes, they can help the researcher to recall certain events that occurred on particular days and may contain certain emotions and feelings that can be related back to the event (Sands, 2002). Crucially, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 144) state that, "there is no advantage in observing social action over extended periods if inadequate time is allowed for the preparation of notes". They also go on to explain that, "the memory should never be relied on entirely" and "if in doubt, write it down" because observations will fade from memory and then the ethnography will quickly become incoherent and muddled (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 144). Finally, field notes cannot provide a comprehensive record of the research setting, as the ethnographer will gain tacit knowledge, which is not possible to convey in its entirety within written notes (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Therefore, the ethnographer's situated personal interpretation and meanings can also be used as part of the analysis process alongside the field notes to fill in any gaps that might be missing from the field notes; the field notes should not be viewed as if they are only information available (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2001; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Krane & Baird, 2005).

Atkinson (2015) suggests that due to advancements within technology it is now possible to store field notes in electronic form, either as typed notes made on a computer or tablet. In addition to written notes an ethnographer can also audio record any interactions and conversations that occur. Therefore, as I knew that the focus of the research was centred

on video-based feedback sessions, I used a Dictaphone to record these meetings and any pre or post meeting conversations that I had with the coaches or players. These meetings would sometimes occur during the room with the coaches before the players arrived, or they could be the week before the training camp over Skype. During my time with the sport I would always ensure that I was carrying my Dictaphone, so I could quickly get it out and record any conversations that I thought might be relevant or useful for my project. Once I had audio recorded the conversation, I transferred them to store securely on a computer and made sure that I named them with the date when the recording occurred and whether it was a meeting or conversation about a meeting. In addition to the copious audio recordings, I would endeavour to make written notes at the end of each day about certain reactions and behaviours that occurred within the meeting or conversation as these would not be represented within the audio file. Due to the busy nature of the training camps, these concise field notes made at the end of each day would then be further expanded upon once the training camp had finished (see Appendix B). Finally, an additional source of information was any electronic communications (text messages, emails etc.) that I had with the coaches and players; therefore, these were also archived and kept securely for future reference when constructing the findings.

### 3.5.6 Interviews

Despite some academics debating whether interviews should be used within ethnographic studies (see Atkinson, 2015), others have suggested that interviewing is one of the most important data-gathering techniques for an ethnographer (Fetterman, 2010; Krane & Baird, 2005). As Ely (1991, p. 58) stated, “interviews are at the heart of doing ethnography because they seek the words of the people we are studying, the richer the better, so that we can understand their situations with increasing clarity”. Therefore, at some stage “most

ethnographers will also interview members of the culture or setting under study in order to deepen their understandings of the people there” (Atkinson, 2012, p. 28). The interview(s) would generally be held after a period of participant observation so that the researcher has already begun to gain an understanding of the culture (Atkinson 2012; Krane & Baird, 2005).

To some people interviewing may appear relatively straightforward and think it is just asking a few questions and getting answers, but interviewing can give insights to people's opinions, feelings, emotions, experiences and meanings of their of experiences (Purdy, 2014). Furthermore, there are different ways the interview could be carried out, for example, structured, semi-structured or unstructured, formal or informal, and one-to-one or focus groups (Fetterman, 2010; Krane & Baird, 2005; Purdy, 2014). Therefore, these different options will be discussed within this section.

To begin with, informal interviews typically take place within the field and are used to gain a clarification or to get a participant to elaborate on a recent observation when the opportunity arises (Berg, 2001; Ely, 1991; Krane & Baird, 2005). These interviews could range from a single question to a brief conversation or discussion around the area of interest to provide further insight to the participants' behaviours and feelings during the activity that had just been observed (Krane & Baird, 2005). Alternatively, formal interviews are scheduled conversations or discussions where a participant is explicitly asked to meet the researcher to answer questions about specific areas that have emerged during the participant observation phase of data collection (Krane & Baird, 2005).

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggested that most interviews are usually prepared for by the researcher developing a script or guide, and the structure within the interview relates to how closely the interview remains to the script throughout its process. Therefore, within a structured interview the questions and predetermined sequence would be adhered to strictly, whilst a semi-structured interview would use the guide to cover suggested areas but

would not necessarily do so in the pre-specified order (Krane & Baird, 2005; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Consequently, a semi-structured interview allows for the interviewer to use their own judgement to decide if the interviewee's response warrants opening up different directions that might provide relevant information which may not have been on the original guide (Krane & Baird, 2005; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Purdy, 2014). A semi-structured interview would allow for more flexibility than a structured interview, but an unstructured approach would offer the most flexibility (Krane & Baird, 2005; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Purdy, 2014). Within an unstructured approach there would be some key areas that the researcher wants to discuss, but the interview would be more spontaneous, and an emphasis would be placed on "the natural flow of the interaction and the knowledge and experience of the researcher and participant" (Purdy, 2014, p. 162).

As well as the different ways of structuring the interview, the researcher must decide whether to use one-to-one interviews with individual participants or whether to use a focus group type interview/discussion (Purdy, 2014). A one-to-one interview allows for more in-depth examinations and discussions around an individual's attitudes, opinions, beliefs and values with respect to certain aspects (Purdy, 2014). However, this type of interviewing is often time consuming so involves few participants; interviews within the literature have ranged from 45 to 135 minutes with one to twelve participants (see Debanne & Fontayne, 2009; Nelson et al., 2014; Norman, 2008; Olusoga, Butt, Hays & Maynard, 2009; Taylor et al., 2017). Alternatively, the researcher could use a focus group interview with the participants who would be able to provide a range of ideas and experiences which might not be captured during an individual interview (Krane & Baird, 2005; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Purdy, 2014). Furthermore, the interactions that occur during a focus group may create new ideas and topics that would not have arisen from an individual interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Purdy, 2014). A challenge for the researcher would be to ensure the group size is small enough to allow all the participants to share their views, but big enough so a variety of

perspectives emerge (Purdy, 2014). The role of the researcher during a focus group interview would be to facilitate and guide the discussion around the topic area under investigation, encouraging all participants to share their viewpoints (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Compared to individual interviews, focus groups tended to last for a shorter period of time, with 30 to 90 minutes mentioned in research, with group sizes ranging from three to twelve (see Gould, Lauer, Rolo, Jannes & Pennisi, 2008; Knight and Harwood, 2009).

Interviewing has predominantly been a face-to-face process, but telephone and Skype calls are also used, which perhaps help when access or time are limited for either the researcher or participant (Purdy, 2014). Using a telephone interview is sometimes seen as problematic as there are a lack of visual cues and the body language cannot be viewed, but by using technology, such as Skype, for video calling this problem can be overcome (Krueger and Casey, 2009; Purdy, 2014). To ensure the data collected from interviews is recorded accurately, researchers commonly audio record them using a Dictaphone, as this allows for the researcher to re-listen and review the dialogue (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). Additionally, once an interview has been transcribed, it should be given to the participant to ensure what was said is accurate and the words capture the true meaning of what was expressed (Purdy, 2014). Finally, by returning the transcript to the participant, it allows them to edit aspects that they might want to change or remove, and they can negotiate what information is made public (King & Horrocks, 2010).

Within this research project, I adopted various kinds of interview techniques at different phases of the data collection. For example, during the participant observation phase, I used informal questions to gain further understanding from individuals (Fetterman, 2010; Krane & Baird, 2005). Additionally, once the participant observation phase had been completed, I conducted formal individual interviews with the participants to understand certain situations that occurred in more detail from the participants' perspective (Atkinson



2012; Krane & Baird, 2005). These formal interviews were semi-structured in nature, allowing me to cover areas of interest in relation to the thesis research objective and research questions (RQs 1-3). The semi-structured nature and conversational nature of the interviews allowed me the flexibility to go in various directions depending on the responses from the individual, which often led to extra relevant information being uncovered (Krane & Baird, 2005; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Purdy, 2014). All of the formal interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed verbatim, before allowing the participant to check the transcription for accuracy and further comments before moving onto the analysis of the interviews (King & Horrocks, 2010; Purdy, 2014).

### **3.6 Participants and context**

Due to the access I had been granted with the sport, the participants were selected via purposive sampling (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). However, the work of Patton (1990) outlined that there are many different subtypes within purposive sampling and it could be argued that the research adopted three of these different subtypes during the investigation. For example, 'criterion-based sampling' was used to ensure that the participants undertook specific experiences (video-based feedback sessions); additionally, 'convenience sampling' was adopted due to the access that had been granted by the sport, and finally 'total population sampling' was also required as everybody within a video-based feedback session was audio-recorded and observed by the researcher (Patton, 1990; Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

In order to protect the identity of the 19 individuals within the sport, each individual involved in the study has been given a pseudonym and the sport shall not be named. To aid with the understanding of who was involved within the team and what their role was, the table below shows each individual and their position within the sport as well as the year in which they started working or competing with the team.

**Table 2. The participants and their positions in the team**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Year started with Team</b>
Matt	Performance Director	2013
Greg	Head Coach	2013 coaching (1995-2008 playing)
Barry	Assistant Coach	2013 coaching (1998-2008 playing)
Sam	Psychologist	2013
Rich	Performance Analyst	2013-2016
Ian	Performance Analyst	2016
Will	Sport Scientist	2013
Max	Strength & Conditioning	2013
Pete	Captain	2013
Mark	Vice-Captain	2013
Simon	Player	2013
Josh	Player	2004
Adam	Player	2016
Ben	Player	2013
Elliot	Player	1995
Cameron	Player	2005
Liam	Player	2013
Sean	Player	2014
Oscar	Player	2011

Furthermore, to provide additional background context before the results chapter, the hierarchy within the sport is illustrated within an organisation chart below. Whilst the Performance Director (Matt) reports to a Chief Executive and Board of Trustees, these individuals were not involved within the research and as such have not been included within the organisation chart. The chart purely demonstrates the hierarchy for the participants within the research project. Whilst the chart attempts to highlight the hierarchy within the sport, it was sometimes difficult to gauge exactly where people were in the system. However, every member of staff ultimately reported to Matt, even though they would also work closely with the Head Coach (Greg) to provide him with any necessary information from their particular discipline. The players also reported to Matt, but most of the time they would work with the coaching team and other members of staff. Within the athlete group, there was a

captain and vice-captain who had been selected by the coaching team. Therefore, they are positioned slightly higher than the other players as they would sometimes be invited by either Matt or Greg to represent the players during certain staff meetings.

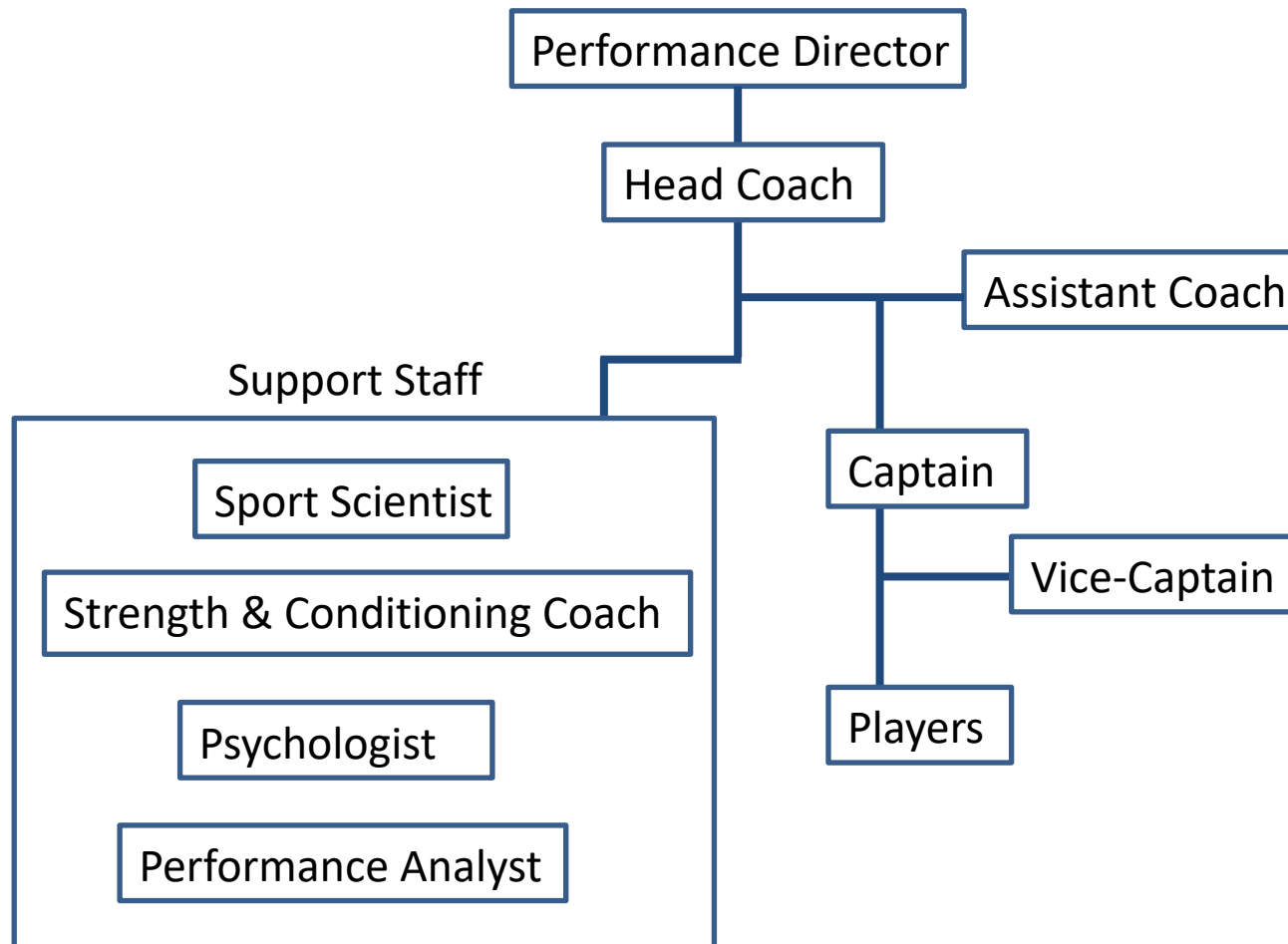


Figure 3. An organisation chart for the team

### **3.7 Data collection**

Prior to data collection, institutional ethical approval was granted to collect ethnographic data, including observations, interviews and audio recordings of naturally occurring conversations (see Appendix C). All of the participants within the study were made aware of my dual role as the Performance Analyst and researcher, and all participants completed an informed consent (see Appendix D). Due to the nature of the work, a risk assessment was also completed, which highlighted potential threats to the completion of the project (see Appendix E).

The process that was utilised within this research comprised of audio recording team meetings and conversations with coaches and players about team-meetings over a period of 15 months. This period of time covered both training camps and competitions with the squad and enabled 45 hours of audio files to be recorded. During this time electronic communications (e.g. emails, text messages, WhatsApp messages) were also captured for conversations concerning team meetings and particularly video-based feedback. Whilst both these data sources were being collected, individual participant interviews were undertaken with the Head Coach, Assistant Coach, Sport Psychologist and five players, which totalled 14.5 hours of interview data. In addition, any observations made during team meetings, or at training camps/competitions, throughout the 15-month period of data collection concerning the interactions that were occurring were recorded as field notes by the principal investigator (see Appendix B).

### **3.8 Analysing qualitative data**

The data collected during a qualitative investigation can appear “unstructured, messy, intimidating, confusing, and, at times, contradictory” (Taylor, 2014, p. 181), and while the work of Creswell (2007) suggested a step by step guide of how data analysis could be undertaken. Taylor (2014, p. 182) contests this view because from his experience data analysis “rarely conforms to patterns or a pre-existing ideal”. Furthermore, the paradigm within which the research is being undertaken will influence various aspects of the investigation, including how research questions are formulated, how the researcher behaves during the data collection phase and how the data is treated (Taylor, 2014). Due to this research being conducted within the interpretive paradigm, the data collection and analysis are viewed “as a knowledge-making experience, where meaning(s) are constructed about the social world as collective encounter between all parties engaged in the research and through the subjective nature of the individual” (Taylor, 2014, p. 184).

Within the data analysis process, a researcher can either adopt a predominately inductive or deductive reasoning approach, although in reality, Tracy (2013) suggests that most social science research involves a combination of both approaches. Gratton and Jones (2010) proposed that an inductive approach is often closely associated with interpretive research, whilst a deductive approach is often related with positivist and quantitative research. Tracy (2013, p. 22) outlined a 4-step procedure for both inductive and deductive approaches, which are outlined below:

#### Inductive

1. Begin with observing specific interactions.
2. Conceptualize general patterns from these observations.
3. Make tentative claims (that are then re-examined in the field).

4. Draw conclusions that build theory.

#### Deductive

1. Begin with a broad or general theory.
2. Make an educated guess or hypothesis about the social world on the basis of this theory.
3. Conduct research that test the hypothesis.
4. Use the evidence gathered from that research to confirm or disconfirm the original theory.

Given the outlines above for inductive and deductive approaches, the nature of this research project aligns to an inductive approach. This is because the work has not made an educated guess or hypothesis that is being tested but is based upon observing interactions that occur within video-based feedback sessions.

#### 3.8.1 Narrative analysis

Prior to explaining what narrative analysis is, it is important to understand what a narrative is; however, this is a difficult task because it can mean different things to different people (Smith & Sparkes, 2009a). Nevertheless, Smith and Sparkes (2009a, p. 2) combined the work of various authors (e.g. Copley, 2001; Czarniawski, 2004; Elliot, 2005; Gergen, 1999; Nelson, 2001; Riessman & Quinney, 2005) to suggest that “a narrative is taken to mean a complex genre that routinely contains a *point* and *characters* along with a *plot* connecting *events* that unfold *sequentially* over *time* and in *space* to provide an overarching *explanation*

or *consequence*". It is worth noting that the terms narrative and story are sometimes used interchangeably, but this approach is not always viewed as acceptable (Frank, 1995; Smith & Sparkes, 2009a). However, Frank (1995, p. 188) stated that "since narratives only exist in particular stories, and all stories are narratives, the distinction is hard to sustain".

Narrative analysis is a method that aims to describe and interpret how people perceive reality, make sense of their worlds and perform social actions (Griffin & Pheonix, 2016; Smith & Sparkes, 2009b). Smith and Sparkes (2009b) explained that it is an approach that takes the story as its object of enquiry rather than an account, report, chronicle, or a few brief words. Additionally, Riessman (2008, p. 11) stated that "narrative analysis refers to a family of methods for interpreting texts [e.g. oral, written, and visual] that have in common a storied form". Therefore, narrative analysis gives the researcher an opportunity to explore meaning and experience through the narratives that people tell (Smith & Sparkes, 2009b). Smith and Sparkes (2009b, p. 280) drew upon previous work by Polkinghorne (1988) and Smith and Sparkes (2009a) to explain that "narratives play a key part in constituting meaning, making sense of our experiences, and communicating meanings and experiences". Furthermore, Woike (2008, p. 434) explained that it "may be a particularly good choice for researchers interested in complex, subjective experiences, as well as intentions, patterns of reasoning, and attempts to find meaning in personal experiences". As this research project is exploring the meaning and experiences of participants during video-based feedback sessions a narrative analysis approach will be adopted. However, it is worth noting that Coffey and Atkinson (1996, p.80) commented that "there are no formulae or recipes for the 'best' way to analyse the stories we elicit and collect. Indeed, one of the strengths of thinking about our data as narrative is that this opens up the possibilities for a variety of analytic strategies". Therefore, the narrative analysis conducted within this project should not be viewed as the only way in which the stories can be interpreted; they are open to



interpretation by others due to their subjective nature (Smith, Sparkes & Caddick, 2014; Gibson & Groom, 2018). As such, another individual could conduct an analysis on the same data but from a different viewpoint as people “construct different versions of the social world” (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p.14).

When composing the narrative, there are different options available to a researcher in terms of the type of tale they tell. For example, a realist tale is “where the author goes into the field, collects data and, in the finished written work, reports on what the members of the culture have said, thought and done” (Purdy, Jones & Cassidy, 2009, p. 327). When composing a realist tale it is often thought that the author should be absent and removed from the narrative (Sparkes, 2002). However, on the other hand there are questions and concerns about whether being an absent author is indeed possible because a researcher is ultimately responsible for selecting the quotations and shaping the story that is presented within their work (Purdy et al., 2009; Sparkes, 2002). Therefore, it has been suggested that the author could write themselves into the text as the reader gets the participants’ story as well as the researcher’s interpretation (Purdy et al., 2009). Consequently, the narrative now being presented should be referred to as a modified realist tale, which is the approach adopted within this particular research project (Sparkes, 2002). It was deemed appropriate to write myself into the stories due to the fact that I was present and an active participant as the events unfolded and therefore would be difficult to remove from the narratives that were shared in the findings/results.

Thematic narrative analysis focuses upon the content within the narrative and is the most commonly adopted approach within sport and exercise literature (Riessman, 2008; Smith, 2016). Smith (2016) presented a 7-step guide to suggest how this particular type of analysis should be undertaken. Additionally, Smith (2016, p. 263) commented that “the guide should be viewed as cyclical and iterative as opposed to linear and fixed” and as such a

researcher is able to move (both backwards and forwards) between the different stages as necessary for the particular narrative being composed. The steps suggested within Smith's (2016) guide are: write, transcribe data, organize data, narrative indwelling, identify narrative themes and thematic relationships, describe and interpret and finally represent results.

### 3.8.2 Data analysis process

The rationale for adopting a narrative analysis approach within this thesis is because it allows the presentation of the data from various sources (e.g. observations, field notes and interviews) to be represented in a coherent narrative with the aim of understanding and make sense of the participants' social world in a storied manner (Smith & Sparkes, 2009a, 2009b). That is, by utilising narrative analysis these different data sources were interpreted into a common storied form (Riessman, 2008). Once the interviews had been audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, the data was analysed by adopting an inductive narrative thematic analysis as explained by Riessman (2008) and Smith (2016). This required the re-reading of the interview transcripts, along with the additional data sources, to immerse oneself in the data, which is known as narrative indwelling (Smith, 2016). This immersion enables the researcher to identify key characteristics, patterns and categories that are present within the data (Gibson & Groom, 2018; Smith, Bundon & Best, 2016). The identification process involved examining the settings, characters and plots that were unfolding within each narrative and systematically coding them (Gibson & Groom, 2018; Smith et al., 2016). As with the work of Smith et al. (2016), the themes were then reviewed within the entire data set to notice larger themes and patterns that were present throughout all the stories.

At this stage in the research, the supervisory team were asked to adopt the role of a critical friend to provide alternative views and interpretations of the gathered data, as recommended by Smith et al. (2014). Furthermore, by sharing the data with critical friends, I was able to discover whether they thought that the information provided in the findings were sufficiently 'rich' in data (Smith et al., 2014; Tracy, 2010). After sharing the findings with the research team, I undertook a period of data refinement to consider some of the alternative opinions offered which enhanced the resonance and credibility of the findings. Following the period of data refinement, I began to link the data to relevant theoretical concepts that would enable the reader to make sense of the findings. In this thesis, the theoretical concepts from Goffman's (1959) *'Presentation of Self in Everyday Life'* were used as a lens to interpret the findings. Once again, the supervisory team were asked to adopt the 'critical friend' position to challenge the theoretical readings that were being made and ensure that there was coherence between the research objective and the interpretations offered (Smith et al., 2014; Tracy, 2010). Thus, the data analysis process consisted of iterative cycles of data analysis, theorising and refinement, rather than a singular coding process.

### 3.8.3 Reflections on the research process

Reflexivity is important within a research project because the researcher is a central figure regarding the data collection, selection and interpretation (Finlay, 2002a). Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor and Tindall (1994) suggested that reflexivity is now a defining feature when carrying out qualitative research. Reflexivity is about understanding the researcher's own position and engagement with the world that is being investigated and it can be "a way of addressing the presence of the knower in the known and vice versa" (Gray, 2008, p. 936).

The researcher's behaviour can affect the participants' responses during interviews, so if another researcher carried out the same interview a different story may unfold due to the relationship between the researcher and participant (Finlay, 2002a). With this in mind, Finlay (2002a; 2002b) suggested the research produced is (co)-constructed by both the participant and researcher, and to enhance the integrity, trustworthiness, transparency and accountability of the investigation the researcher should evaluate how subjective and intersubjective elements influence data collection, analysis and interpretation. One method of evaluating this is by using reflexivity, which Finlay (2002a, p. 532) defines as "thoughtful, conscious self-awareness".

Reflexivity recognises how a researcher "actively constructs interpretations of his or her experiences in the field and then questions how those interpretations came about" (Hertz, 1997, p. viii). By understanding that the researcher and their experiences of the world in which they are immersed are intertwined, the aim of reflexivity is to identify some of the connections that influence the subject and object (Finlay, 2002a). However, based upon each individual researcher's aims, values and epistemological assumptions, the best way to exploit the reflexive potential of the work will vary to account for these differences (Finlay, 2002b). Gray (2008, p. 947) contests that emotions should not be separated from the reflexivity process as, "emotional (dis)identifications and attachments are central to the framing of the object study". Furthermore, Gray (2008, p. 947) went on to say that because research is an emotional and mindful activity, the emotions "can energize action in the world and are central to knowledge production".

This process of reflection and reflective analysis can be carried out from the moment the research is conceived, as it would allow the researcher to reflect on the topic that will be investigated and their relationship to it (Finlay, 2002a). As the research enters the data collection stage it could reveal insights about how the relationships within the research

shape the findings gathered, like the work of Ellis, Kiesinger and Tilmann-Healy (1997). Reflexive analysis challenges the researcher to think about how the data has been collected, the methods utilised and the researcher-participant relationship (Gough, 1999). Reflexivity attempts to address and raise awareness of areas that other research might avoid, it can be a confessional account of either the methodology or one's own personal reactions, therefore, it can provide a voice for exposing researcher silences (Finlay, 2002a; 2002b). Finally, Finlay (2002a, p. 542) suggests that "reflexive analysis is precisely the route to ensuring an adequate balance between purposeful, as opposed to defensive or self-indulgent, personal analysis".

Within this research, I engaged with reflexivity throughout the process to acknowledge my presence, particularly with regards to the data collection, selection and interpretation (see Appendix B). Due to my engagement with the participants over the course of the research project, these interactions will consequently shape the findings as they are co-constructed by the participants and me (Finlay 2002a; 2002b). It could be argued that by not undertaking reflexivity the research would not recognise the presence of the author within the study concerning decisions that were made about the chosen methods, theories and interpretations of the work (Finlay, 2002a; 2002b; Gough, 1999).

### **3.9 Judging the quality**

There are a number of important differences between qualitative and quantitative research (e.g. the types of data, research design, purpose, ontological and epistemological commitments). In addition, this includes the suitability of criteria used for judging the quality of the research. Quantitative research tends to be judged through measures of internal and external validity; however, adopting these approaches would be inappropriate for qualitative

work (Smith et al., 2014). The early work of Lincoln and Guba (1985) still remains the benchmark when it comes to judging qualitative research (Smith et al., 2014). It is often utilised within sport science and sports coaching (e.g. Bucci, Bloom, Loughhead & Caron, 2012; Gucciardi, Gordon & Dimmock, 2009; Krane & Baird, 2005; Walsh, Ozaeta & Wright, 2010). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested several criteria, including credibility, transferability and dependability, which combine to make the trustworthiness of the qualitative work. Furthermore, they suggest some ideas and techniques that could be used to achieve the goal of credibility, such as prolonged engagement in the field, persistent observation and peer debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, this approach has been critiqued by Sparkes (1998, 2002) as well as Sparkes and Smith (2009). Some of problems that they identify are that, firstly, “the actual techniques proposed to achieve aspects of trustworthiness are not appropriate to the logic of qualitative research” (Smith et al., 2014, p. 193). Also, Smith et al. (2014) suggest that towards the end of the 1980s Lincoln and Guba, after listening to the critiques of their work, changed their stance and rejected the idea of achieving trustworthiness by utilising specific data collection techniques. This change in opinion can be seen in their later work (Lincoln, 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 2005), but their 1985 proposal is still adopted by modern qualitative sport researchers (Smith et al., 2014).

Moving away from a parallel approach to judging qualitative research, Sparkes (1998, 2002) and Sparkes and Smith (2014) suggested an alternative approach called the ‘letting go’ position. This position involves letting go of traditional views of validity that suggest certain techniques are the only way of obtaining and guaranteeing trustworthiness and relies on other more relevant and appropriate techniques and criteria to judge the quality (Smith et al., 2014). This approach adopts a relativist perspective (which is aligned to the approach within the present thesis), where characteristics including time and place influence the judgement of qualitative work (Smith et al., 2014). Importantly, the list of

characteristics are not what *should* be used on *all* occasions within qualitative research, but a list that *might* be adopted, or partially adopted, depending on the *context* of the research undertaken and the relevance to the research project (Smith et al., 2014). Tracy (2010) suggested eight criteria for judging qualitative research. This includes: (1) Significant contribution, (2) Worthy topic, (3) Rich rigor, (4) Sincerity, (5) Resonance, (6) Credibility, (7) Ethics, and (8) Coherence.

Following this work, Smith et al. (2014) adapted these criteria to include the work of other researchers (e.g. Barone & Eisner, 2012; Holman Jones, 2005; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998; Richardson, 2000; Smith & Caddick, 2012; Sparkes, 2002; Sparkes & Smith, 2009, 2014). This led to a broad list of criteria that a researcher may wish to use to judge qualitative research. The additional criteria included: (1) Impact, (2) Width, (3) Aesthetic merit, (4) Dialogue as a space of debate and negotiation, (5) Personal narrative and storytelling as an obligation to critique, (6) Engaged embodiment as a condition for change, (7) Transparency, (8) Incisiveness, and (9) Generativity. Importantly, there is no target for the number of criteria that should be utilised, and by using more it does not automatically mean that the work is better than another that used less. This is because different types of studies will use different criteria from the list to judge the quality of their work, and they will be applied in a way that is applicable to the particular context under investigation (Smith et al., 2014).

For this particular piece of research, readers are encouraged to judge the quality of the work based predominantly on the work of Tracy (2010) and Smith et al. (2014). The reason for including a particular aspect to judge the quality was because they align with the aims of carrying out the work. For example, as a researcher I believe it is important for the research to have an impact and give a significant contribution to the field. The following list

will highlight which aspects will be used, along with how it will aim to achieve this within the research project:

- (1) *Significant contribution* – does the work extend and build upon methodological and theoretical or conceptual approaches in a different context to existing research? Rather than re-applying a particular theoretical approach, does the research offer a new and unique perspective (Tracy, 2010)? Specifically, for the purpose of the present thesis readers are asked to consider the empirical, theoretical and methodological contributions to the sports coaching and performance analysis literature.
- (2) *Impact* – does the research affect the reader in either an emotional or intellectual manner? Additionally, does it generate new research questions and areas for future studies (Smith et al., 2014)? Within this thesis, does the research undertaken provide new empirical and analytical insights that may be used to inform future performance analysis practice?
- (3) *Worthy topic* – is the research “relevant, timely, significant, interesting or evocative” (Tracy, 2010, p. 840)? Is the research interesting by challenging common assumptions rather than confirming existing beliefs (Smith et al., 2014; Tracy, 2010)? Is the research topic investigated both relevant and interesting, and does the work challenge the existing literature within the discipline?
- (4) *Rich rigor* – does the study use sufficient, abundant, appropriate and complex theoretical constructs, sample, context, data and time in the field, and data collection and analysis processes (Smith et al, 2014; Tracy, 2010)? Does the research study an appropriate sample size and spend significant time in the field exploring the context under investigation?



- (5) *Sincerity* – does the research utilise self-reflexivity to consider subjective values, biases, and inclinations of the researcher? Also, is there transparency about the methods used and any challenges faced (Smith et al, 2014; Tracy, 2010)? Does the thesis acknowledge the role of the researcher within the project and any challenges which they faced when conducting the investigation?
- (6) *Resonance* – does the research influence or move readers through aesthetic merit, evocative representation, naturalistic generalisations and transferable findings (Smith et al., 2014; Tracy, 2010)? Do the narratives resonate with the readers, and do they allow the readers to understand the life worlds of the participants?
- (7) *Credibility* – does the research provide a “thick description, concrete detail, explication of tacit (nontextual) knowledge, and showing rather than telling” (Tracy, 2010, p. 840)? Are the narratives presented within this thesis rich in detail?
- (8) *Coherence* – does the study use methods and procedures that fit its internal goals? Additionally, does the work interconnect literature, research questions, findings and interpretations with each other (Smith et al., 2014; Tracy, 2010)? Was the thesis aligned so that the research questions, research design, data collection and analysis, findings and discussion all linked together?
- (9) *Transparency* – was the data shared with a critical friend, or friends, who could provide “a theoretic sounding board to encourage reflection upon, and exploration of, alternative explanations and interpretations as they emerged in relation to the data” (Smith et al., 2014, p. 196-7)? Each opinion offered presents an opportunity to deepen and extend the interpretation, as each additional viewer has a different view which can challenge and develop the interpretations (Smith et al., 2014). Was the data shared with a critical friend(s) to provide alternative opinions and ideas as part of the research process?

### **3.10 Section conclusion**

Within this chapter, I have outlined how the research originated from an applied need from the EIS, and how the research objective was to provide a more in-depth understanding of the use of video-based feedback with elite sports teams. The next section highlighted the importance of understanding the philosophy of science, as these philosophical views shape the decision-making process throughout the research project, depending on which paradigmatic choice is made. Therefore, the different paradigms available were discussed, before outlining how the research objectives aligned to adopting an interpretivist approach for this thesis. Due to the nature of an interpretivist approach, utilising ethnography as the methodological choice was considered appropriate. Consequently, the key characteristics of ethnographic research, the different types of ethnography and the data collection techniques adopted within this thesis were all discussed. Following this, the participants and the context being investigated were introduced, before illustrating the data collection process undertaken within this research. The subsequent section then demonstrated how a narrative data analysis process was implemented to analyse and make sense of the collected qualitative data in a storied manner. Finally, nine criteria were proposed which could be utilised by the reader to judge the quality of this research.

## Chapter 4 – Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

In this section, I will present a narrative analysis of a number of *key events-in-interaction* that unfolded during my time working within an elite disability sports team as the performance analyst. These narratives, or stories, have been created from data collected during interactions at the time (e.g. audio recordings of team meetings, conversations, and electronic communications) and after the event (e.g. interview data and my own reflexive accounts). The narratives have been co-created by the participants within interaction and re-represented by myself following the events (Sparkes, 1995). Therefore, given the corpus of data the analysis should be considered storied, co-created, partial, incomplete, contested and fragmented in nature (Groom et al., 2014; Sparkes, 1995). In particular, the interviews are conceptualised as an opportunity for the participants to share their views and feelings about the events that occurred rather than present a *true* account of events. The ten constructed narratives have been storied within the context of the narrative environment within which they were shared. The stories are presented in chronological order, from when I first met the team, to the 18-month ethnographic engagement within the field, which included two major competitions: the 2016 Rio Paralympics and a 2017 European Championships. The decision to present the narratives in chronological order within the thesis is methodologically important because the earlier narratives may have influenced the future events that occurred within the narrative environment (Czarniawska, 2004).

## 4.2 Preparation for team meetings

Since becoming part of the team, I was expected to carry out my role and assist the Head Coach (Greg) and the Assistant Coach (Barry) with statistics and information that they required from matches. I had successfully completed this task at a training camp when another team visited. I had provided a statistical summary after this camp for Greg and Barry, which they were pleased with. Following this training camp, the team had been away to a competition which I had not travelled to but been sent footage to analyse remotely. The following conversation is one I had with the coaches regarding the competition that they had just been at and the upcoming debrief about the competition that was going to occur at the next training camp.

### Transcript of a pre-meeting Skype conversation

*Greg: With the games from last week will you be able to put those into ermm a PowerPoint for me to use next week?*

*Ian: Ermm*

*Greg: You know like you did last time?*

*Ian: Yeh yeh ... which slide did you use in the end for that?*

*Greg: We used the one you sent us cause I changed it a little bit*

*Ian: Did I send you the one with graphs in, did you use them at all?*

*Greg: no we didn't use those ... we used the original one in the end*

*Ian: Ok*

*Greg: But the players liked that ... they really enjoyed reading that*

*Ian: I can do that again for those six games and then a total, so yeh that should be fine*

*Greg: Are you happy with that Barry?*

*Barry: Ermm sorry I was reading these emails ... the stats that we had last time? Yeh they enjoyed them, they were very good ... the key for me at this stage is just making sure these stats are completely valid and you know I think use these when the players have a look at them to ask questions and you know when we say our conversion rate was 77% you know is that accurate is the information being captured and just get comfortable with that cause I think we're asking all the right questions and getting there on that but getting the belief in the system from the players would be good. And then there's lots of things that you're doing with the lines and, you know I do like the idea of a timeline of a turnover.*

*Greg: Ermm, I mean maybe you can come in on that meeting Ian if you're comfortable with that and you know maybe show the big spreadsheet that you just showed me and Barry and explain to the players what we're doing*

*Ian: Yeh, I can do that*

*Greg: Cause I think that will also enhance what we're trying to explain to them as well, so if you're happy to come in on that meeting then that would be good*

*Ian: When's that meeting?*

*Greg: It will be on Monday, Monday evening ermm sorry Wednesday evening*

*Ian: Wednesday evening, yeh that's fine*

*Barry: Oh, that's for the players thing?*

*Greg: Yeh*

*Barry: Yeh, that's perfect*

*Ian: So I'll get that slide so it's done and I'll have my laptop so we can stick up the stats for each individual game and the totals and stuff and talk through them*

Following this conversation, I produced a statistical summary for Greg and Barry which I was prepared to talk about at the stated meeting. I used the previous summary sheet as a template as they had commented on how they wanted me to do what I had done before. I also made sure that I was familiar with the bigger spreadsheet that I used to draw the data from, as they had mentioned potentially sharing that with the players to give them an insight into the work I was doing to get the final product that they saw. Once I had prepared the slide, I shared it with Greg and Barry prior to the meeting so that they could approve the work and were aware of what I was going to show the players. They were once again happy with the work that I had produced and reiterated their wish for me to share and explain the information to the players during a team meeting. This team meeting was also audio recorded and the following transcript shows what was said during this session.

#### Transcript of a team meeting

*Greg: Listen up ... I think first of all we'll just explain or explain as best as we can ... normally we have the logistics debrief and then the technical tactical, we haven't got the logistics cause Matt's not here for family reasons. So by all accounts he's going to be sending out a questionnaire I think that's important cause he's going away to Brazil next week to put those views forward, so to those who were there your opinion makes a difference and could help us when we go to Rio in September. So that leaves mine and Barry's job tonight. The way I want to set this up tonight really is get things out but also be constructive on what the solutions will be so if people have got a real gripe about something how can we make it better for next time, so let's just keep it really constructive but let's get all the shit out of the way as well, alright? ... So I want to start off first of all with, and it's almost to help the people who weren't out in Rio, so when Denmark came over and ermm ... what we've done really is through Will and Max and all the Support Staff and everything we're doing this document at the moment about how*

*can we beat these top teams. You know, we worked out that there's a percentage that we need to get to, to be able to beat these teams or at least compete. Now around 80% is the mark we need to be at with our conversion rate and you'll hear me talk about this a lot; conversion rate is how many possessions do we score from? Right, we need to be getting towards 80% to be giving us any chance of beating these top 4 teams. So, we started it when Denmark came over and it was not too bad really, if anybody is interested we can have a look at that afterwards. But this is what came out of our games, just gone. So, if I just try and explain from the first game, so Canada 1: so they scored 53, we scored 57.*

*Ben: Coach, I'm a bit confused because at the meeting there you told us after the Australia first game that we were at 75% conversion rate and it says there 85*

*Greg: That was like an off the cuff, like a quick translation sorry*

*Ben: Oh ok*

*Greg: So yeh we had 69 possessions, and we scored 57, so that's 83%. So then we break it down again, how many turnovers did we get, 12, didn't get the 100% but I feel and you'll see later on that the top teams are getting their turnovers and converting them, so I feel this is something we need to be getting better at. I know 1 is pretty good but it would be interesting to know why we gave the turnover back, that's the other thing we need to bring into consideration as well. And like I say the 1 against us ... Canada scored all their goals against us when they turned us over. Ian, turnover ratio can you actually explain that please?*

*Ian: Yeh, so the turnover ratio is literally the total turnovers for each team, so you can see in Canada 1 you both got 12 so it's even at 1.0, whereas in the next one the 1.5 is for every 1 against you, you get 1.5, so you're doing better than Canada there, you've got 15 and they've got 10. Does that make sense?*

*All: Yeh [general agreement]*

*Ian: So when they've got more turnovers than GB, in the Australia second game obviously it's less than 1.0. So anything better than 1.0 is good because you've created more turnovers than you've conceded.*

*...*

*Barry: So can I ask Ian, if there's a jump ball and it remains say Australia possession does that count as not a turnover and if it's a jump ball and it comes to us that is a turnover?*

*Ian: Yeh*

*Barry: Essentially how we are counting it at the moment is we don't have a separate stat for jumps but obviously they are turnovers half of the time essentially and they're just not counted half the time but we could draw out jump balls as a*

*Ben: I don't think just jump balls, I think what Elliot said was just possession arrow if we're looking to manage it*

*Greg: We can definitely put it in there. So I'm just going to hand you on to Ian before we go into the real nitty gritty of this and just explain how we come to these and what we do to come to these stats*

*Ian: Yeh, so I tag the game in Dartfish which is quite simple and then this looks a lot more complicated than it is. So then I break it down and take out the goals, so that's the highlighted bit there, and that also tells you the order that the goals are scored in so you can see that you've got the first goal and then you keep swapping goals backwards and forwards and then there's a couple here so that means that they've got a turnover there cause obviously you'd start with the ball after their goal. And then as well as that I've got information for the different line that was on, so you can see it gets broken down to how you were doing as a line for both turnovers for and against you. I do that for all the games and then I can put all the lines into one page and I can group them so this is how you played together in all six matches, total possessions, total goals, total conversion rate and I can do that for all the lines.*



*Elliot: How does it equate to the minutes the line-up had to their percentage?*

*Ian: I haven't looked at time*

*Barry: Well goals will be your sort of thing there ... so if you look at 'Ben, Liam, Mark and Josh' they've got 90 possessions and 68 goals so a line like 'Simon, Mark yourself and Oscar' similar stat in terms of conversion rate but it's only on for 25 possessions*

*Elliot: Right, gotcha. That answers my question, lovely*

*Ian: Yeh, so it is just going on the possessions and goals that you've scored. That was just some extra information and then I put all of that, so that's the totals from each game, into a table which then goes into the PowerPoint and make it look a bit prettier!*

*Pete: Are we going to get that information?*

*Greg: Ermm my initial reaction was no because I think this is good information for us at the moment to see which lines work well, I'm hoping to be persuaded but my initial reaction is no.*

*Cameron: How does this translate I guess to the opposition that the play against?*

*Ian: Yeh that's the next thing to who include who else is on but obviously that will make it quite difficult if you've got an opposition line that can change with subs and at the minute I don't really recognise any opposition players!*

*[General laughter]*

*Barry: I think statistically we're obviously just going off the beginning here, if it's after 20 games the idea is hopefully those will even themselves up and there won't be little anomalies that cause big statistical differences.*

*Elliot: It's a difficult one to measure in a test event cause everyone is chucking loads of shit out there anyway, everyone knows what everyone's lines are going to be pretty much, it's difficult to focus on every line-up for every team*

*Greg: I think that one think we are learning even in that short ... the tournament there, I didn't get it right all the time but there were times when I knew a line-up would work against a line-up and that's what I'm trying to get to at the moment so when we review all this and look back on the videos and stuff and with the competitions we've got leading up to Rio I'll know by the time we get to Rio what line will work against what line. That might seem a long way off for some of you, but you know we're developing a line at the moment that I feel is going to give us an extra dimension. I also feel that some of the other lines that we've got will definitely work against some of the opposition lines and some lines won't work so I probably won't use them at all in that game against that line-up, so ermm this is all information for me and Barry to give us the best possible chance of putting the right line-up on at the right time.*

*Greg: Anybody got any more questions on this and what we've talked about so far?*

*[Silence]*

*Greg: Ok, thanks for that Ian **[quietly]** good job there mate*

### Interview data

Some of the preparation can be seen by reading the earlier transcript of the Skype conversation I had with Greg and Barry, but I wanted to gain further insight into the preparation they did for the meetings. Therefore, during the interviews that were carried out with the participants, the coaches and support staff were asked about how they prepared for a typical video-based feedback session. When asked about some of the general preparation for team meetings, Barry said:

*The initial discussion is what do we want to get out of the classroom session and then we come to you cause we need stuff. And a lot of it is about how that session will work as a process, how do we get engagement from players?*

*You know, setting the framework getting them to go into their groups and bringing it back together again. I think we've become more conscious of making sure we've got our message that we want to get across whatever happens, but to do it in a way that they still, you know, they are still having input and valuable input from the beginning.*

After this initial conversation, Greg then explained how they look to some support staff for extra help; in this case, I was providing them with relevant video clips once they had decided upon what the meeting was going to be focused upon.

*So basically I just get you to give me what I want, then I'll look through it, then I'll clip what I think is relevant and then errm what's been happening lately as well is that Barry will have been looking at it as well and then we will come together about the ideas that we've got. [...] So basically what I would do, I've got a good idea of what I want and then if Barry picks up anything I've missed then I'm happy to sort of show that clip rather than my clip cause I think you know what he's seeing is ... I think that's why I have two pairs of eyes is not a bad thing so then ultimately we will come to a conclusion of 'right, we will show those clips'. More often than, I'd say 95% of the time it's a joint decision. Even if I do something the night before, I'll always pass it through Barry just to get his thoughts on it as well. So he might not see what I've been looking at, but I'll show him and then we'll you know we'll sort of just do a quick review on that and you know then he will give me his thoughts.*

Once I had provided them with the relevant video clips, Barry explained how they sometimes delegate the work to one person or the other.

*I think it works best when one of us just does it and checks with the other. Just I've got my own sorta way of thinking about it and there are so many clips and none of them are perfect, it's not an obvious like here's your 6 clips from a game, you know, so if I can pick 8 and Greg then choses his 6 but I*

*know I'll have got... you know, we talk about what we want in the clips so we definitely want clips of offence, so we know what type, I've got a clear direction of what I'm going to look for.*

When pressed upon why this was important to him, he stated that:

*If we delegate it to one or t'other of us then there's less disagreements. And the disagreements are quite small, but they can take a long time to sort of go through and, you know, sometimes we just end up not agreeing. I mean, essentially, if you're looking at a press and what should this person do here and what should that person do and who's at fault there, so I'll just concentrate on one aspect of it and he'll concentrate on another and we're both right but we're both think ours is more important and key to feedback. You know, if you look at a video and you're showing it to the players, there are lots of different options that can make things better. So I don't think we think the other is stupid and wrong, but it's about that level of importance about what the message is or which message we want to get across.*

Furthermore, another type of disagreements that the coaches tend to have were usually simple matters around what clips to show with each coach coming from a different point of view. However, after having a conversation with each other about it, they did tend to agree upon which clips were best to show the athletes during the video-based feedback meeting.

*I mean it can be things a sort of simply you know which clips, if you've got 8 clips, which clips do you show? And so you've gotta then articulate why you want your clip, he wants his clip, you know you've gotta understand the reasons for why people have got their opinions. And once you're at that sorta lower level, I mean that's how I feel all these conversations are, we're automatically coming back with a position like 'I want these 5' and he says 'well, I want those 5' but if we just discuss why we want particular clips, we*

*are much more likely to agree. So we'll end up just changing a couple of things and going closer together, you know we'll be happy with the comprise.*

Once this has been sorted out, Greg explained how they go about their final preparations for the team meeting and what they involve.

*Yeh, we do discuss how it's being delivered. Errm, so the order of the clips, ermm, the order of the session itself so to make sure that it's sort of fluent that we're not keep going backwards and forwards, we try not to, ermm, I like to try and think of a flow and then you know there have been times when I have moved it around because it made sense from what Barry said and I think vice versa. I mean I'm quite happy to take most of the sessions but I do think sometimes a different voice is a good thing and I think you know, if I think that ... there are times, or there have been times in the past when I've not been confident in what I'm saying, so then what I'll do then I'll talk to Barry about it and if he's got, if I feel he's got more of a confidence about delivering that then you know I almost let him do it.*

Barry had a similar opinion surrounding their final preparations, although did give further insight into how some of the decisions are only made the evening before the meeting.

*I mean we sort of we've bumble through getting the format right and then really it was Monday night that we decided you know who was going to do what and mainly it was going to be me and I said my bit could take a while umm but ummm I think Greg decided then that he would sort of use his clips for sort of during the camps and stuff which he did so umm yeh we made that decision definitely before we get into the room but it's almost one of the last things we will decide. Just cause umm on that one it took a lot of preparation to do all the, you know when you're doing the clips and stuff,*

*you gotta get those things done before you make the decisions last minute about right who's going to do what, how long is that going to last etcetera.*

Further to talking about how the coaches prepare for meetings with each other, and the support I can provide for them, I wanted to find out if other members of staff had any input when they were preparing for team meetings. Therefore, I asked Greg if he used anyone else to gain input and he explained how he sometimes had assistance from either the Performance Director (Matt) or the Psychologist (Sam). He explained how Matt helped him out more when he was new into his position, but he can still turn to him for advice after any meeting that he has been present in.

*Well Matt is also very very experienced, he has probably been in a thousand of those types of meetings so I think anything that I can pick up from him ... ermm or I guess at the beginning he would very much help by you know [saying] 'you might find it better doing it this way' or you know what I mean so I'd always take that on. I think now I just, I'll just ask him for a review and he'll just give me just one or two bits to either work on or you know compliment on if that makes sense?*

Additionally, he described how Sam can sometimes help him before team meetings, but this was usually done when the team were away at tournaments rather than for the team meetings that occur at training camps.

*So at the beginning of a tournament Sam will help me in the ermm the content sometimes just so I'm saying the right things to the players and they can ermm ... what's the word ... I'm using the right language when I'm talking to them, you know? Obviously then working through Sam then you know things like that I ... that's why you'll see Sam in the meetings cause then I'll ask him to review what I did.*

Therefore, I carried out an interview with Sam to find out in what ways he helped Greg and Barry prepare for meetings. To begin with he talked about how he helped them generally and encouraged them to utilise video within their coaching more frequently to help reinforce a point to players.

*It's been around the structure of the entire session I think ermm and also with regard to IPRs [Individual Player Review] as well ... and so I guess what I've encouraged them to do, well particularly Greg to do, is when he is talking to a player, either an individual player or the group, about a particular point is to provide evidence. So I definitely encouraged him to use videos where he might not have done in the past to individual players to provide evidence of either where they need to develop or shortcomings in their game if he is giving them a more harsh message if that makes sense ... so I think he is using it as almost both a carrot and a stick ... so there's part of it is to you know demonstrate what they're not doing right to back up say a low score in the IPR and then he might use the same or different video clips to discuss how they could develop.*

After gaining an insight into how he had helped Greg and Barry generally with using video-based feedback within their coaching, I enquired what role, if any, he played within the preparations for team meetings. As Greg had said, most of the help was provided during competitions, but occasionally it would be around the meetings held within training camps too.

*I think most of my involvement with them, because I'm not a tactician, I'm not meant to be an expert in the sport, most of my involvement has been around how to manage the mood in the room probably more than the actual content. In particular, if they've had a loss how would they start off the conversation, or if they've had a win how would they start off the conversation, so it's really around assessing and speaking to the mood in the camp. Having said that, they will also talk to me about, well they certainly*

*used to, they don't do it so much these days, but they used to talk to me about use of video analysis in those sessions; in terms of what kind of clips should we show and do we just tell them or do we ask them. I've also had discussions with them about the order in which to do that so do you finish on a high, do you start on a high, or do you provide some kind of sandwich, where you show doing it well then it not going so well and then doing it well again. But I think they've tended to sort of work on the basis of working through video clips that show where things haven't been working and asking the players for their input and then showing some clips of how it does work.*

All of these extracts from Skype conversations and team meetings along with the quotes from interviews begin to show how much work and effort the Coaches would put into the preparations for each team meeting. Greg did not just work on his own and had input from Barry and could then also draw on other members of staff, such as Matt, Sam or myself, for extra opinions and help too. This assistance was rarely about the tactics but could have been about how best to manage the atmosphere in the room, or even something like providing certain sections of video clips for Greg and Barry to use within the presentation. All these members of staff would provide assistance, within their field of knowledge, which the coaches could call upon in order to be suitably prepared whenever they went to deliver a presentation to the athletes.



#### 4.3 'This is what we are trying to do in the sessions':

##### Coaches interpretations of the video-based feedback sessions

###### Interview data

*If you look at the evolution of how they've used video analysis, it's gone from a very much teacher style 'we're going to show you a clip, we're going to tell you what's going wrong', through to a more 'we're going to show you a clip and we're going to ask you what's going wrong', through to a more 'right, we're going to show you an instant clip as soon as its happened and we're all going to talk about it' and now much more into 'we're just going to share clips via social media and get everyone pitching in' and there's been a phase in that somewhere where 'we're not even going to show you a clip you all need to go away and generate your own clips or look at the video and come back with your own comments'.*

This quote from the Psychologist (Sam) demonstrates how the video-based feedback sessions have evolved during the reign of the Head Coach (Greg) and the Assistant Coach (Barry). Having witnessed the different styles of video-based feedback sessions delivered by Greg and Barry and having seen some of the work that they do in preparation for the meetings, I wanted to gain further knowledge around these sessions and find out what they were trying to achieve within their sessions, and how they tried to achieve this. Therefore, I carried out interviews with Greg and Barry to ask them about their video-based feedback sessions and any challenges and obstacles that they had encountered during their time working with the sport. In terms of how Greg perceived the sessions to have evolved during his time in position, he said:

*I think we've tried to make it more ermm interactive now so that they can't disengage, I think that's just learning from the mistakes we've made in the*

*past it ... its and I [inaudible] myself constantly about it because I'm not the most confident in that respect when it comes to those types of meetings.*

The point Greg made about learning from previous mistakes was shared by Sam, who commented on how the coaches have adapted the way coaching and video-based feedback sessions are carried out since they first came into the position.

*I think it's been, you know, learning by experiences and learning by mistakes. So they start off thinking 'well this is the way we'll do it' and I think a lot of it has been driven by, in the early days was driven by, what they thought they needed to be as a coach. You know, they needed to be the knowledgeable person, who stood at the front and told all the players what to do. And I think they've moved more and more away from that lecturing/teaching style much more towards a more collaborative approach, where they still know what the points they want to make, but they get the players to answer the questions before they tell them.*

Furthermore, Greg's attitude during the video-based feedback sessions was that he did not like to overly single people out for criticism in front of the group but admitted that there were times when this type of approach was necessary.

*I don't like finger pointing, I know there's always going to be times when you need to do that but I think what we've learnt, especially with the groups of players that we've got, is that ermm you know there's a way of telling them what you want without putting them down and I think we've learnt that so away from that we will be a lot more critical of players.*

However, the last part of the quote shows that Greg and Barry would perhaps speak more freely to each other about the players when they were alone. When questioned about

this, Greg gave an example of how a conversation might happen between himself and Barry, before sharing how the conversation with the player would occur.

*So I can say to Barry 'fucking hell, what the hell was Cameron doing there?' whereas with Cameron I'll actually say to him 'you know mate you know if you'd tried this, this might have been the way to do it better'. So I try not to be as ermm expletive in front of the players, I try to be a lot more measured when I'm talking to them. There's got to be a lot for me to lose my temper in that respect and I'm not that way so I'd rather ... I think you get your message across, in my opinion, the way I do things is that I think I get more out of a player being measured than I would be screaming in their face and f'ing and blinding, but I do think there is a place and a time for that as well.*

Whilst Greg does not like finger pointing and picking individual people out for criticism in a group environment, he acknowledged that if a match was being reviewed in a team meeting it is hard not to single certain people out as not everyone in the meeting will have played during the match. The following extract shows how this type of situation was dealt with in the build up to the Rio Paralympics and how he hopes this will change over the next cycle.

*So the ones who were on-court a lot were always going to be in the videos a lot and the ones who were on-court were going to be the ones who made mistakes, so for us to be able to show the mistakes they were normally on-court. I mean I'll use Liam as an example; Liam makes a lot of mistakes. He was probably on the video a lot when those mistakes were being made. Would I let other people get away with it? I can't remember if I was conscious of that or not. There was certain people that you know you could have a go at or pick on and there were other people that you didn't and you know I think we were both guilty of that.*

So then do you think now you're more even and whoever makes a mistake it's just 'right this needs to be corrected' and perhaps a bit more blunt and straightforward?

*Erm yeh, if we look at what we did last week with the videos I think I tried to keep it quite balanced, but that's because I used everybody so it could be balanced. I guess when you go into a competition, I mean my ideal scenario is that everybody would get on in every game. That's how I feel about the squad going forwards, maybe not this year but definitely from then on, so you can be a bit more balanced about it. If Ben's on 100% of the time and he's making mistakes he probably got away with a lot more than most because he was the one player I needed more than anything. So whereas Liam and Simon were vying for the same position, Simon just made less mistakes and so it always seemed to be whenever there was an error in the video footage it was Liam more often than not.*

Barry agreed with Greg's point about not wanting to target individuals within a team meeting and make them feel uncomfortable. He highlighted how they would be mindful of showing too many negative clips of an individual within the group setting and what they may do to try and resolve this sort of situation.

*I mean a lot of clips which, you know, probably on the negative side of things, so we might have three or four clips of a player just not spacing the court properly and might show one but we're definitely not gonna show lots cause we don't wanna sort of bully a player in front of a meeting I guess. You'd absolutely try and choose lots of different people. I think you know again this IPR system or one to one system, you know maybe that's something to note down is 'look consistently it was this person, so let's keep these clips and let's get a one to one with him' and say 'look, didn't show them in the meeting, but it's when you're on-court this is a major thing for you to work on', really sort of give them that one to one time.*

Whilst the coaches did not want to use excessive finger pointing within sessions, this was not always the case. Sam commented on how he noticed that certain individuals were perhaps targeted more than others, while other players would get off more lightly, depending upon whether Greg and Barry viewed them favourably or not.

*I think in the past there were almost two ends of the spectrum. Sometimes, it was like 'we're going to show this clip to really make a point and really embarrass a player' or 'we're not going to show this clip because it will really embarrass a player' depending on which player they were targeting. So I think I would say when the two of them were there I sometimes got the feeling that personalities came into it, and you know 'oh we've really got to teach so and so a lesson, so we're going to show him this clip' or you know one of their favourites they would say 'oh no, don't be too harsh on them'.*

However, Barry did acknowledge that on occasions they did not always manage to avoid singling players out and a couple of the players sometimes perhaps felt like they were targeted more than others, despite their best efforts to avoid this.

*I was aware that Cameron and Liam in particular felt picked on. And probably I think the only person who I felt I could've been better at critiquing would have been Ben, but at the end of the day, I know Ben's the sort of person that if you didn't do anything with he would learn a lot still, he learns from the experience. So I felt, and this is something that I couldn't really get across to Greg is, these two players were energy sapping in a way, so that would be a frustration. And I hate it when people deflected criticism from themselves onto another, and that was just a few people, but Cameron was one of them. And so if I was going to criticise you, alright maybe I'm a little bit critical, but your reaction will really sort of then set me on a course of action in terms of if you just try and bullshit me or if I see you out there fucking up and then telling other players they're doing the wrong thing. You know, yeh I guess it became personal and you know we need to be setting out our values a little*

*bit better and we could have de-personalised by saying look this sort of behaviour isn't acceptable.*

Furthermore, this became a more significant issue than something that would occur just within a team meeting and could sometimes spill over onto the on-court sessions. In turn, because he spent more time focusing on these individuals during training sessions, it meant that more of the video clips that he asked me for would contain those players.

*I don't mind if people make mistakes. What I mind is then that person going to somebody else on-court and going 'look you should have done this'. And what I've seen is person A, let's call him Cameron, fucking up and then telling Mark 'you fucked up' ok? And so that became a behaviour that I found irritating and that irritation probably spilled over into whatever sessions, not just classroom, it spilled over everywhere, and I was frustrated that my eye would be drawn to you know those players.*

Greg was aware of the situation and was trying to make sure that it did not get out of hand and become a big problem within the team. Therefore, Barry had to control his emotions and behave in a way that was expected of him by Greg to manage the situation.

*I was then in a position where I knew Greg didn't want me to, I don't know, have a confrontation or was worried about me ruining Cameron's confidence. I always felt I was a little bit guarded, when I get a bit angry, you know? Fucking hell, I could have a got a lot more angry. I felt like I was bubbling inside man. And again, that's just a matter of trying to define the culture and keep on defining the culture so it doesn't have to be a personal thing.*

Whilst the coaches led the team meetings, they did occasionally encourage the players to open up and share their views on certain situations. During one of the team

training sessions, Greg and Barry called the players together by the whiteboard so that they could show them some video of what they had been doing in training. It was a fairly open discussion with players allowed to put their views forward in front of the group and lots of different options were discussed. However, one of the more senior and vocal members of the team strongly disagreed with Greg's opinion of the video and views upon the situation. Later on when I asked Greg about this situation and how he had felt and react to it, he explained to me that:

*I'd have been really pissed off with myself. So yes, I do take those things on board because if I'm a bit wishy washy in what I'm doing then I won't get the buy in from the players then. So sometimes I do feel under pressure, because we're asking for a quick turn around on things and it's not been one of my strong points. I like to be able to think about it and analyse it and then go into it, whereas the way I've been trying to do it, to make it a bit more dynamic I guess, is do it during the play so they can just bring it back but ... It's probably a vanity thing, I don't like being shown up so if I have been shown up I want to make sure that doesn't happen again. I can't remember if Ben was right or wrong though, if I'm going to be honest, I can't remember whether I thought he was right or wrong. I definitely take things on board and try and make it better for next time. [...] I think in hindsight now I would like Ben to come to me afterwards and talk me through it, rather than doing it in front of the group because I'm not precious enough, I know I make mistakes. So I'd like to get to that relationship with somebody like Ben, and I think I will get there, where he knows you don't do it in the group, you do it individually afterwards. So I think it's just making sure we get those relationships to benefit everyone, cause one think that we don't want to do, we don't want to stifle peoples' views. We want to make sure that we've got, you know, even the newest player make sure that they get heard as well.*

Additionally, Barry explained that there were times when perhaps it was best not to have conversations with certain characters within the group as it could be a distraction to the task at hand.

*I can say that there were times when Ben would do things wrong and I was conscious that I didn't want to tell Ben he was doing something wrong because he can be a very forceful character. If he speaks heatedly about it are you prepared to have that conversation there and then with him?*

Sometimes there can be disagreements between people within the team meetings over what should happen in certain situations; an example was given earlier about how a player questioned whether Greg's opinion was correct. However, Barry talked about how they looked to portray themselves to the players within these meetings and the importance of not undermining the other person or having a disagreement with each other in front of the players.

*I mean we definitely look to have a united front. I think we can ... we might frame it that, you know, there's not just one answer, but then we can also frame it that, you know, we don't want a big talking shop about it. You know, have a look at this clip and this is what we want to get out of it. So we can frame it in either way. I mean, me and Greg are working together and we're our own little team so we have to have each other's backs, we just have to have each other's backs, and, if you feeling you're being undermined you're not gonna work effectively together.*

Furthermore, I asked Barry if he felt any additional pressure during the video-based feedback sessions depending on which members of the staff team were present for the meeting. He admitted that it depended on which member of staff it was and sometimes



when the Performance Director (Matt) was present in a meeting he felt more pressure, but that did sometimes actually end up helping him.

*It shouldn't really. It's a little bit like when you're playing a game; does it matter whether there's 100 or 1000 people in the crowd? You still try and play the same game; but there's a bit more pressure when Matt's there. But, I mean I think my mantra's always to slow things down and take my time and just being in control all the time, so I think he keeps me honest on that.*

Also, Sam commented that when all the other staff members were present within the team meetings that perhaps it had a negative effect on Greg, and therefore, at times he felt unsure of his opinion.

*I think sometimes Greg felt like staff were sitting in judgement watching him and there was quite a lot of interplay between Greg and staff, Barry and staff, so a lot of sort of chat behind the scenes and so I think there could have been some undermining going on, not necessarily on purpose, but I think Greg could have felt undermined at times.*

This section has sought to outline what Greg and Barry were trying to achieve within the video-based feedback sessions. It was not always a straightforward process, with many differing factors seeming to affect the sessions. For example, they were aware of the number of video clips of each individual that they shared within sessions as they did not want people to feel victimised, but this was not always possible. Additionally, there was sometimes an increased pressure upon them depending on which members of the staff team were present during the video-based feedback meetings. Whilst some quotes from Sam have been added into this section to help explain what Greg and Barry were trying to achieve and how he

perceived the sessions; the following section will explore various players thoughts and feelings surrounding these video-based feedback sessions.

#### 4.4 'This is what I thought of the sessions':

##### **Players interpretations of the video-based feedback sessions**

Having started to gain an understanding of how the Head Coach (Greg) and Assistant Coach (Barry) were trying to utilise video-based feedback within their coaching programme, the players were asked for their opinions about the sessions. This was carried out with the aim of trying to understand how the players interpreted the sessions and if they could recognise the work the coaches put in before the session and the message itself during the sessions. This section has been broken down further with the use of sub-headings to group together comments made by the athletes that relate to the same, or similar, subject areas about the video-based feedback sessions.

In order to gain a better understanding of how the video-based feedback sessions had changed since I had started working as the Performance Analyst with the team, I asked a player about this within an interview.

##### Simon

*I'd probably say the coaches have more of an input and they do more of the speaking, whereas before Rich were doing a lot of the speaking, so he were inputting and putting his opinion on as now it feels like it's fully the coaches' opinion and I think for the respect and the coaches to get out of it what they want they need to be delivering it.*

Whilst Simon was generally positive towards how the sessions were now delivered to the players, with Greg taking more ownership of the sessions, the next section will highlight the attitudes of the players towards the meetings.

#### 4.4.1 Players' attitudes towards meetings

To begin with the players discussed the general attitude towards team meetings from their perspectives. Overall, there seemed to be a fairly negative approach to these meetings with players not always looking forward to them, but some of the more senior players who were interviewed understood the need for these meetings and the importance of learning in different environments and not just on the court.

##### Mark

*I know people don't generally like meetings, people don't generally like meetings, but you know it's something we've gotta do so that's the way I sort of look at it. I sometimes think I'm a bit negative going into the meeting, thinking you know 'this is just going to be another one of those meetings where we don't get anything out of it' but I'm not negative about meetings in general, but I think the majority of players probably are.*

When questioned as to the reasons why he thought people were not keen on having team meetings or the lack productivity during the meetings, Mark explained that:

*I just think that it's ... I don't know ... some it will be like an educational thing, they're just not used to it and they've never done it, they've not even done it in school. And then there's the other side of it that think meetings would be good but they don't think that we get anything beneficial out of it so are already thinking negatively before they go into it.*

This was a view that was shared by another player within the squad who felt that sometimes pointless discussions would occur as Greg and Barry had already decided what they wanted to happen in that situation in the future. This was a frustration for the players,

as the meeting could have been a lot shorter or more issues could have been discussed within that time.

Josh

*If there's no need to discuss something cause they already know what they're going to do then we don't need to spend an hour going well if he went long there ... you know 'this is what I want the next time' so like understanding that bit before a discussion in a meeting is critical because otherwise it's a waste of time.*

Furthermore, he went on to explain that before a meeting even begins that players within the squad are already guessing how the meeting will unfold and what is going to occur. However, Josh did go on to say that it was not just restricted to team meetings and it could happen for anything that the team were doing.

*I don't know whether it's just us as a squad, but we love taking the mickey out of everything. It doesn't matter what it is, whatever we do there's a comical side to, you know, so and so's going to do this and so and so's going to do that and we already know what it's going to turn out like, that's kind of the in joke I think, already predicting what's going to happen in any meeting.*

Additionally, due to the nature of the training camps within the sport, team meetings used to be held after dinner to discuss either what had happened during that day's training sessions or prepare/debrief for a competition. As the players had been training all day and if the meetings went on for a while or started becoming repetitive, it sometimes became difficult for people to concentrate as they were tired.

Adam

*I was not an academic child, far from it, and classroom sessions can become, if they're very long and repetitive, difficult to keep concentration, but at the same time I've been to plenty that have been not long, given me information, given me stuff to think about and I've found informative. I could probably say that for some of the squad of players, I'm not sure how many people actually take stuff from meetings. I think some people just go to them because they have to. However, I do think there are people that get stuff from meetings and find them useful informative. But I think that because different people learn in different ways, I think you'll find some find it easier to learn in an on-court environment and others find sitting in a classroom quite difficult. And that's the opposite way round as well, some people they find it difficult to learn something without actually seeing it on a piece of paper, so I'm happy with the format of classroom sessions that I've been in and I think you could get better sessions by them not being too long, but packed full of information because if stuff gets repeated it becomes a long session, especially after training, people get tired and bored and find it difficult to concentrate.*

Despite the players' concerns about the length of some of the team meetings and players' attitudes towards them, Adam was aware that they were a necessary part to assist the learning that was required to make improvements within the sport. However, Adam suggested that perhaps other players were not as accepting towards learning within classroom sessions.

*Well, to be perfectly honest, I am fully aware that one you're not going to learn everything on the court and there has to be times where you learn stuff in a classroom or watching videos or whatever. Whereas, I get the impression that some people find it hard to understand why, because they're not open to the fact that they may need to see something in a video of a mistake that they've made, or you know a video of what other people should be doing so I think people need to be realistic about how we all learn.*

Whilst Adam understood the need for classroom sessions and learning in different environments, it was suggested that perhaps people were put off these types of classroom sessions because it reminded them too much of a school environment, which they might not have enjoyed when they were a child.

*Some people will struggle at school and it may seem that it's like we're back at school again, but that's not an excuse. I'm sorry, we are an elite level of sport and, no matter what sport you're in, at this level there is classroom work. It doesn't matter what sport you're in, there is a certain element of video analysis or you know that sort of stuff that you have to do and I'm obviously relatively new to this, but I'm definitely aware there's stuff that you have to do that you might not like. It is not necessarily down to how the sessions or lessons are being put across, it's just an unwillingness to be part of a classroom session of any kind.*

Overall, it seems as if the players are not keen on having team meetings, but some of the squad understand why they are needed and the importance of having such meetings. Furthermore, they all raised similar points about how the sessions should be kept as short as possible so that people did not lose their concentration if the meetings were dragging on. Furthermore, Mark and Josh highlighted how if the meetings are beneficial for the players and they learn about certain situations, they thought that players would be happier attending meetings if they were more productive. This would be an improvement on the sessions where players leave the meeting not knowing what they have learnt, or what the point of having a meeting was.

#### 4.4.2 Different approaches and styles within sessions

Having gauged how players felt about the team meetings, they were asked about the different approaches and styles that Greg and Barry adopted within the sessions. The players all seemed keen on having variety within the sessions so that they did not become repetitive and boring, as shown in the quote by Adam below.

Adam

*If you're delivering the same information to people the same way all of the time people will get bored, if you can make a classroom session interesting, make it varied on how it's actually put across, then you'll be reaching more people because of the fact that people learn differently. And, you know what, this might sound a little bit clichéd, but variety is the spice of life. It might give people something interesting you know just to do, something slightly different, it's not difficult and if it works, great, and if it doesn't work then you know it's not really lost. If what happened next had not worked, nobody's really gained anything from it then it's not like you've actually lost anything, it's just maybe a technique that you maybe won't use in the future, but then there's lots of other techniques that can be used to help people learn.*

Furthermore, Pete added that he had liked the 'what happens next approach' when the coaches were sharing videos with the squad. This was an approach when Greg and Barry would start to show a small clip of the video, and then pause the video to ask the players what was going to happen next, before showing them what happened and having a discussion about the situation that occurred. He went on to explain that other approaches are perhaps best suited for different situations that perhaps are not within the classroom environment.



Pete

*I think in classroom sessions it's quite good to have the what happens next because that's almost like a mini test, like do we know what should be happening here without having seen this video, which hopefully we do. I think that's good and I think the round the bus one would be for people's input for when we're like maybe out on the court when we've done the ones when we're actually in our chairs and just done some key attacks or something or press breaks and then we get called in I think it's sometimes quite useful to do that there.*

Finally, Josh discussed the approach that he would like the coaches to adopt within the sessions as being short and straight to the point, without having big discussion about every point.

Josh

*I'd say short and sweet, as long as every point is made quickly, like straight to the point whatever it is. It needs to be said or is in discussion for let's find that answer straight away that's what I want, like new piece of information needs to be shared and understood straight away it doesn't have to be deliberated on.*

However, when Greg and Barry split the squad up and get them to work in smaller groups, Josh was pleased with the way that they will identify certain people within each group that they want to report the information back to the entire squad at the end of the task.

*With the groupings I think they try and group it into ways that make people who don't say as much say more. I definitely think that's something they do,*

*and also they try and get certain people to lead the answers as well, rather than saying Simon say this every time and Liam say this, I want that groups' person to say what it's about to be someone who doesn't speak as much, which forces the issue on or emphasis on people that don't to do it and then that also it makes sure that everybody is important in a group cause somebody might have to take the answer session.*

As well as identifying certain individuals when doing group work, Greg and Barry will also ask individuals for input as part of the sessions when the entire squad is together. If they do not get the answer that they were hoping for from that individual they will wait until they give the answer that they are expecting or wanting from the player.

*They often say 'so and so' and then they'll wait and say 'and yeh not quite next one communication ok no', but you know they are holding on for answers that they want to hear and for us to spot them which is pretty cool.*

#### 4.4.3 The Coaches' message during sessions

Once the players had discussed some of the approaches that Greg and Barry use within their video-based feedback sessions, they were questioned about the message that was conveyed within each session. To begin with Adam explained how the sessions usually appeared to be planned by the coaches.

##### Adam

*I think they do feel planned. I'm sure we would probably notice if it was just random clips thrown at us with a load of questions, without thinking of the actual next stage, cause there will be a next stage to how the session goes. Because people may have different answers and then you have to think about well if people have different answers who is right and who is wrong or*

*are they both right. I'm sure there has to be an element of planning and I think I see that.*

Adam added that Greg and Barry sometimes look for input into sessions from the captain, vice-captain and other senior players within the team.

*I think from what I can gather they actually do when they're planning classroom sessions, you know meetings stuff like that, they do involve the fab four whatever they call it the captains and some of the other players, so I think people have the opportunity to put remarks or comments forward to them before meetings before classroom sessions.*

A common theme that was brought up by other players was that the message of the session was not always clear, or Greg and Barry would start a discussion with the players, to gain more ideas about a particular topic, but then not tell the players what was required of them in that situation to round off the meeting.

#### Pete

*They've definitely started to get better, cause I think a while ago Greg and Barry would kind of open it up too much and often not round it off, or say what they want, and it often used to get into like a debate and it shouldn't have been like that. I think we've had meetings where people have been like 'you just need to say what you want instead of these debates'. I think they feel it's not productive sometimes or it's not the most productive use of time.*

The second point that Pete made about Greg and Barry needing to be more authoritative and say what they want from certain situations was mentioned again by Mark.

#### Mark

*There's been times when we've had a meeting where we've all discussed a certain issue and then but we've not actually had a definitive answer at the end of it and it sort of leaves players still thinking or still wondering what the Coaches want, but not just that, they're left thinking what was the meeting for it seems a little bit like a pointless meeting.*

When further questions were asked about this problem, Mark highlighted how the players could hear many different opinions, from both players and coaches, about a scenario and then leave a meeting still not knowing which approach to adopt when that scenario next occurs within a match.

*I think certain times they've just been very, very unprepared and they've just fallen flat on their face. To be fair, others have been better planned and had real structure in it and they've made it inclusive and interactive and sort of grabbed people's attention and other times it's just been very well quite poor. They've just not had an idea about what they want to get out of it and they've not sort of directed the discussions in with any sort of control or sort of tried to get the right information out of people or they've not had clear ... it's like they've not got an idea about what they actually want, they're almost going in there asking questions without knowing what they want. So they're getting all this feedback and then they aren't able to deliver what they're actually looking for, so its ended up in an argument about different sort of opinions instead them coming out and saying 'yeh that's great, I understand what you're all saying but as coaches this is what we're wanting to do' and then that's it you know its final then. Yeh, there's got to be a bit of discussion cause you've got different opinions and someone in the room might have a better idea, so you've got to listen to everyone. But at some point you've got to be clear about what you want as coaches, cause otherwise you're still gunna leave the room thinking 'well, we've had six opinions and we still don't know what's right, in fact we're more confused now than before we went in'.*

Additionally, Simon had a similar attitude as Mark when asked about the message within video-based feedback sessions. He felt that sometimes players did not get answers about certain situations, or felt confused as to which answer was the correct one when the entire squad was asked for their opinion. However, he liked the idea that players were able to question Greg and Barry and make suggestions that could be beneficial to the team, but wanted them to make a decision about which option was best before ending the meeting so players are not confused.

### Simon

*I think from speaking to everybody in the squad, I think they prefer it when Greg tells us what he wants. Where he shows a clip and says 'this is what I want' cause if you start going round every player it drags it on, people are talking for ages and ages and people just start to switch off and then you don't feel like you've got answer. Cause they'll go round everybody you might have got 4 different opinions and then if Greg doesn't say what opinion he wants or agrees with then you're confused as a player because you've got four different options instead of one guaranteed. Do you get what I mean by that? Cause that has happened a lot in the past where they've shown a clip and gone round the bus and Greg has not said what he wants. You've just got what everybody else has said and then you don't know what to do in a game then cause you've not learnt from it. I mean I think it's good to have an opinion, but I think when you go round the bus and force 12 different athletes to have an opinion I mean like for me he should say what he wants and then open it to the group and say 'does anybody think it should be done differently?' And then cause somebody might see something that he doesn't see which could help us and then they could say it and then he's got to say 'no I still think my ways better' or 'actually that's a good point that will work better'.*

Furthermore, Adam suggested it could potentially be the players who take the session off topic and perhaps Greg and Barry need to ensure that this does not happen.

Adam

*I think sometimes people can get slightly taken off topic, because you will start with a video and you'll be discussing something and then somebody will go 'oh, if that had happened before that, then you know' they're looking at cause and effect, so rather than looking at the actual part we sometimes get caught up in the what happened 10 seconds earlier or what happened after that. So, I think making it clearer exactly what they want us to see, or what they want us to note or observe; if they can do that, I think the more people will get out of it, but I think that's something you can always improve. They need to make sure that sometimes it doesn't drift off topic, or you know to another part of the video, because they will be looking at specific things, very specific things, and everyone's got an opinion as well, so you'll watch a video and the coaches will have an opinion but a lot of the players will maybe have a slightly different opinion, so but that's sometimes why we go a little bit off topic I think.*

Another area that players sometimes found difficult to understand was the actual videos that Greg and Barry were sharing at particular moments within the Rio Paralympic cycle. Josh discussed how the players had sometimes questioned why Greg and Barry were using certain videos if they were not relevant to the upcoming teams that they were about to face in competitions. This shows how the message within the session was viewed by the players as sometimes irrelevant, if they could not see the bigger picture of the coaches.

Josh

*The problem that has been done is showing not the right clips and irrelevant stuff and they've learnt from that, because it's been pointed out. Why did they show us this game and not this game? Why are the clips not Australia and Japan, why are they Sweden and Belgium, or, you know, relevant to that last tournament? Going forward those are the teams we need to have clips from, not this one, cause it has no relevance going forwards in terms of who we've played or who we're about to play.*

This was an issue that had also been brought upon during my conversation with the Psychologist (Sam). He explained how he had been working with Greg to try and improve this situation, so that the players were able to see the bigger picture and understand why he was doing what he was doing.

#### Sam

*In terms of my involvement, I've been working a lot with him since the turn of the year on his clarity of message, so not particularly on any clarity of detail around a particular coaching point at all, but just clarity of message overall. What is the overall message? What are we trying to achieve here as a squad? What's the direction we're going in? So it's sort of that big picture stuff of the next 3 months it's all about the Euros, then the following year it will be about the Worlds, and then the following year it will be about the Euros again, and the following year it's about 2020 and Japan. It's that clarity of message from year to year to keep people focussed. And what I've done a lot of work with Greg on is to make sure that he can always answer the question when a player says 'why are we doing this today?' he's got an answer to that. That's the kind of work I've been doing with him, which means in his own head he's got to be straight on every video clip he uses that it's got a point for what the next target is.*

#### 4.4.4 Players' attitudes towards being shown negative and positive clips

Another aspect within the interview was to find out how players felt when there were either negative or positive video clips shown as part of the video-based feedback session. Whilst the players understood that it could be a difficult issue for Greg and Barry to deal with, Mark commented that it could not be ignored and need to be dealt with so that players could learn from their mistakes and not repeat them in future.

##### Mark

*I think I think that people need to be shown it to be honest. I think they need to be dragged up, not just through VA, but on-court as well. I think they need to be stopped more often when we're doing things wrong. We've just gotta be grown up about it and accept that you know sometimes you've made a mistake and you've gotta learn from it. I'm not saying you've gotta be blunt, you've not gotta put it across as badly as that, but they need to be shown it and you might have to do it a more tactful way, or you might have to do it one on one rather than in front of a group, so they don't feel embarrassed in front of people and do it that way, but I don't think it shouldn't be shown.*

Here, Pete highlighted how Greg and Barry need to be aware of the individual that they are dealing with and how they might react to seeing a negative clip of themselves in front of the group within a video-based feedback session.

##### Pete

*I think it's what you say in those sessions as well. I think there are certain people, like say for example Sean, he would take it a lot worse than someone else, so you would have to be a lot more like buttering him up, I guess. But I think this is all just trying to improve someone, if you've got the answer there for them, you know you're just there trying to help them, that's what coaching is.*



Additionally, Simon discussed the value in showing certain clips where perhaps a simple error had been made by a player that did not warrant the clip being shown in front of the entire group of players. He felt that as long as there was a valuable learning point within the video clip then it should be shown to the group, so that everybody could get better.

#### Simon

*If it's valuable video and you're learning something then you enjoy it, but if it's just like stupid stuff like if somebody's fumbled a ball then you got 8 or 9 clips of them, then it gets a bit boring and you switch off cause you're not learning anything, you're not getting anything from it. If its good feedback that you're gunna get from the coaches, that's gunna improve the team and it's something you can change about yourself or something in the team, like the way they press, but a lot of times we get 8 or 9 clips and it might be just say like a silly error. And that silly error that only has happened once in your career, it's just like what's the point in showing that clip? It's like you can't really change it. I remember one and it were shown and it were like a dropped ball and he were like 'what could you do better?' 'Catch it!' [Laughter] You know what I mean? That just seemed like a waste of a time, cause that's nothing that the individual could change about his game or nothing the team could change about the way the tactics or anything.*

Finally, Adam was not bothered about negative video clips being shown, but he did have a similar opinion to Simon, which was the clip should be a learning point for either himself or others and not just shown for the sake of making somebody look bad.

#### Adam

*Without wanting to sound too flippant, I really don't give a damn what everybody else thinks. If that's a mistake that I've made and it's you know that's a mistake I've made you can't undo it, you can learn from it and I'm sure they're not going to be showing a clip in front the whole classroom just*

*to make me look a dick, you know what I mean? If there's a clip of mistake that I've done, which I will certainly hold my hand up to, but then others may learn from it too.*

Based on this opinion, further questions were asked about whether Greg and Barry should be selective with the video clips that they decide to show in order to get a fair representation of the players within clips rather than just singling out one individual if they had made a lot of mistakes within the same game.

*You know selective is not realistic, if I had really shocking game, an absolute bundle of errors, and they said 'right ok, you've had a terrible game, you've had an absolutely shocking game' perhaps yes they could, rather than showing like a dozen clips and a few of them are exactly the same, perhaps they could be a bit selective there and say this is what you should have done. There's always going to be some element of negativity or negative feedback whatever you do and if they show that in front of me on my own, or in front of a load of people I really don't mind. I'm there to learn from it, I'm happy for it to be in front of whoever they like, it really doesn't bother me.*

Whilst Adam wanted Greg and Barry to be realistic with the video clips that they were sharing with the group, he was aware that this could potentially upset the person that had made all the errors.

*If you put half a dozen clips of somebody doing something wrong I'm sure somebody would get upset, I'm positive they would, maybe not in the session itself but within the group, maybe later, somebody would be upset without a doubt, so it's naive to think it wouldn't happen to be honest.*

Adam explained that in a recent Skype conversation he'd had with Greg that some clips had been shared with him that were both positive and negative in nature. However, he found it easier to remember the positive points from the meetings when perhaps it would have been more beneficial to remember the negatives so that he could improve on the area that Greg had discussed with him.

*If you tell somebody a negative and then you told them a positive, people would concentrate on the positive and therefore they would probably forget about the negative. Whereas, you should probably forget about the positive a bit more and concentrate that, you know, you've done something wrong and you need to do better. But if you show somebody some clips and they've got a negative and a couple of positives, if the positives come after the negative you probably get people feeling happy about it. I'm sure I probably would as well. That actually happened when I spoke to Greg over Skype when he showed me a couple of clips. He showed me a negative, then he showed me a positive and as I've spoken to you about it, it wasn't a bad Skype conversation at all. Whereas I think if he'd just given me negatives then I would have been a little bit more down about it. If you've got no positives to show you can't show them. I think that there's a lot to be said about being realistic with people and especially if they have been crap you've got to tell them, but then you've got to think of people's feelings and all that jazz.*

Likewise, Simon felt that Greg and Barry could sometimes use less clips to make their point in order to make sure that players did not get confused. However, he felt that they should perhaps focus on the more positive clips rather than showing a couple of negative clips about the situation first.

*Sometimes they'll show 3 or 4 different variations and you'll kinda get a bit lost. If there's one clip I think that's when it works at its best, cause they'll show you 3 clips of where it's gone wrong and then one where it were right, when really all they need to show you is the right one.*

#### 4.4.5 General comments about video-based feedback sessions

After discussing various aspects of the video-based feedback sessions with the players, I gave the players the opportunity to discuss any other areas within the meetings that they wished to share with me. To begin with, Simon particularly liked it when Greg and Barry took certain line-ups away from the main group to help them improve on their specific tactics within that formation.

##### Simon

*I like the line-up meetings. I think it's something that they've started to do, but there's not enough of it. I think there needs to be more of that cause it put a lot of self-ownership on the players to do it, but if you say you've got four players and they're doing the VA, having a line-up meeting, they might going totally off from what the coaches want. So I think it's good to have a coach there who can tell us what he actually wants. Cause I remember we did some with me, Cameron and Liam and we all had different opinions on what should've happened in a certain situation and we got no further, whereas if you had a coach there they could've said 'right this is what you should've done' and then we'd have all agreed whereas the three of us were just arguing over one clip over what should've happened.*

Additionally, Josh felt that sometimes it was not always as easy to see certain aspects that had been talked about in meetings when on the field of play, due to the angle from which the video clips were collected. Therefore, it was important to help people understand the information and be able to transfer it onto the court from the video-based feedback meetings.

##### Josh

*If you've got the video screen vertically plastered on the wall in the meeting and you're looking at it from your day chair, or a sofa, looking at the screen*

*where the video clip was taken from above and saying 'I understand that video clip, I can see what's going on, I've pointed out what you wanted me to say without you telling me what to say', great. Then you get in your rugby chair when you're looking at people eye to eye height and not seeing it, because it's you know a different aspect. You know, obviously that's just the way it is cause you've got to keep video clips, but there is a different way to some people understanding stuff.*

Finally, Adam wanted to point out that there were certain individuals within the squad that would not participate, no matter what Greg and Barry did to encourage them. Therefore, it was always the same people that tended to have an input into the video-based feedback sessions and give the coaches answers and ideas.

#### Adam

*From a players' point of view, there are some players that will ignore that and won't participate no matter how much you ask them, cause that's what they've been allowed to do. That's what they've been allowed to almost get away with. They've been allowed to not participate to the same level as say other players who are always commenting in whatever classroom session. So, I think players need to participate more. At the minute it's the same 5 or 6 people that are always answering questions, commenting on stuff and putting forward stuff in classroom sessions or in meetings. So, yeh, I think everybody needs to participate better and more.*

However, Adam wanted the players to take more responsibility for their actions, or lack of them, and not just blame Greg and Barry. He felt that all the players have a duty to participate within the sessions and they should live up to those expectations of them.

*The easiest thing to say is 'oh well it's the coaches they need to do more' and quite frankly that's just wrong. You know, coaches can try different*

*techniques to get people involved and participating in classroom sessions or meetings, but players have to be involved in that. If players are not participating, it looks like they don't give a shit, so all players need to be involved, to keep their end of the bargain up as it were.*

#### 4.5 'WhatsApp-ening':

##### **Video analysis homework and the use of technology**

Due to the sport not having a centralised programme, the Head Coach (Greg), the Assistant Coach (Barry) and the players communicated with each other whilst not in each other's company via WhatsApp messages, Skype conversations, emails and text messages. To begin with I wanted to understand the origins of the WhatsApp group. Mark explained that it was set up by the previous Performance Analyst (Rich) and he was unsure whether Greg was aware of the group to begin with.

*Originally, I believe that homework group was set up by Rich. Not necessarily through Greg, although they might have had that conversation, but it was definitely driven by Rich. He would not necessarily give homework out to the whole group as such, but he would post questions and expect players to respond or to just to start conversation around certain topics and get people thinking about certain things, but that did sort of develop into what it has become. You know, be asked to go and find a clip of say a good pick and roll or a good way that we've done a certain aspect of the game.*

Mark thought the reasons behind Rich setting up the group could be related to his personal aims and ambitions of being a coach within the sport. However, Mark felt that in future this should be instigated by either Greg or Barry.

*Rich took it upon himself to do that because of his own interests and whether the coach has got time to do that I don't know. I would say that he should make time to do it, either him or whoever they put in the role of assistant maybe.*

Once Greg and Barry had taken control of the homework tasks, they would send out an email to the players giving them a homework task to undertake, with their answers to be posted in a WhatsApp group so that everybody could see the responses and to ensure that answers were not repeated. A selection of the different homework tasks that Greg and Barry gave the players can be seen in the email extracts below.

### Feb 2016

Hi guys,

I think the format of the homework we did for Denmark was a good start, so we will be sticking to that over the next couple of weeks as we do homework for Canada and Australia.

The two games to watch this week are both WWRC games, and are on dartfish. They are Canada v Japan, and Canada v USA (gold)

1. Everyone will look at the strengths and weaknesses. Please watch the above videos, and send 2 clips (on the VA whatsapp group) with an explanation of which strength or weakness these clips relate to. If you think there is another strength or weakness it would be good to show, feel free to put it out there.

2. You have until Friday 12th Feb at 5pm to get them in.

Cheers

### April 2016

Hi guys and gals,

Well done to all this weekend ... we're getting some good rugby in the bank. This weeks homework is Canada. Because we have done their strengths and weaknesses recently (although Ian adds another dimension), we're going to change things slightly.

The game: Game 2 GB v Canada Test event.

Task: pick a turnover against us/or GB time out forced. Tell the group whether you think this is a forced or unforced turnover.

Then note what our ball handler\* at the time should have done better or differently AND what someone else on the court could have done better or differently earlier on to avoid a turnover/timeout.

Deadline as usual is Friday 5pm

Again the quality of feedback on VA has been really good. Let's keep it up and note that your answers can be brief as long as they are clear. Any questions let us know.

Yours



## July 2016

Hi guys and gals,

Good camp this week. Lots of little steps which is good to see.

One more step we agreed to address was clock and game management. [We will be having a classroom session on this next week.](#) Ahead of that, we would like to get your input so we can see where we are at and get some clarity on what different situations we will face.

Please look at any game (any team) in the Canada Cup. Please look at the last 1:50s on the clock in any quarter. Choose clips of either good or bad clock/game management. Think about the actions of both the individual and the whole team which lead to success or failure. Explain the most important points to the group.

Normal deadline of Friday 5pm.

Look forward to hearing from you:)

## October 2016

Hello,

I hope all have been enjoying a good break post-Rio, and I know most have returned training.

Ahead of the IPR meetings in a couple of weeks, we've been looking over the videos of the Paras. We would like you to do the same.

Please see the list below. It shows one good aspect of your game, and one where you could improve. Please come up with clips (just the game and times will do) as an example of where you have done well or badly in the particular areas we've highlighted for you. Clips from Paras only please.

Any questions, let me know.

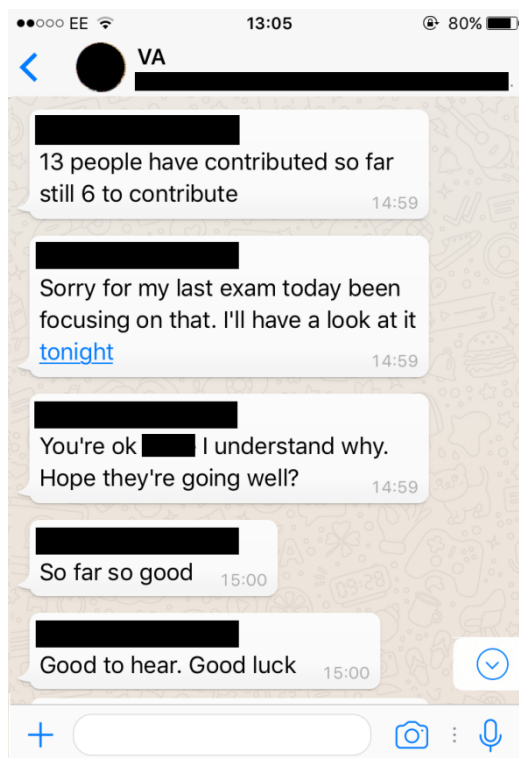
Cheers

Barry explained the importance of getting the question within these emails and homework tasks as focused as possible in order to ensure that the players did not misunderstand the task they were being set.

*We're just trying to get the question right, we're just trying to, you know, have a question be as specific as possible, as you possibly can be in terms of the feedback. So, if it's what are their strengths and weaknesses, we will say,*

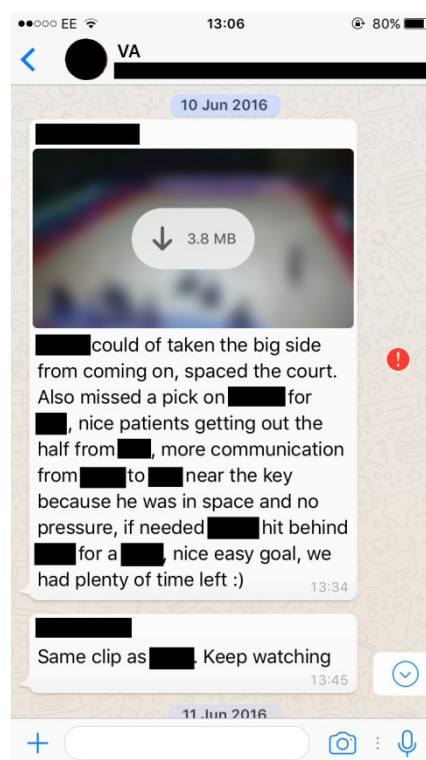
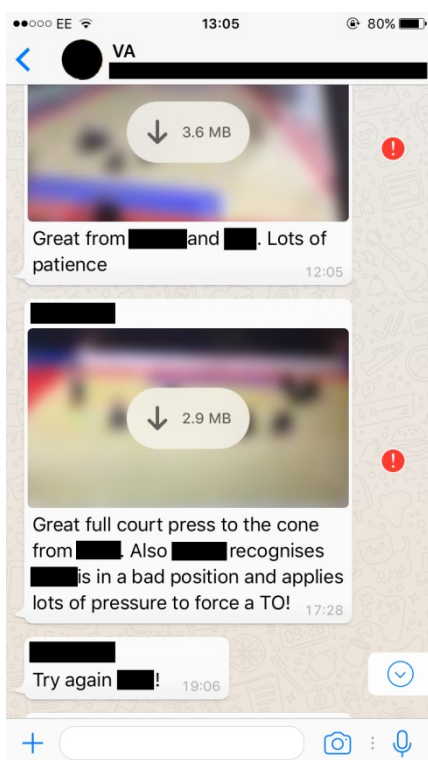
*show one clip of their strength and one clip of their weakness. And you learn that you've gotta be, you know, I don't know just more and more specific on the question, cause they get them wrong if they miss understand the question.*

Once the homework task had been set, Greg and Barry monitored which players had completed the work and sent out reminders in the WhatsApp group. These reminders would either be general without naming specific players that still needed to contribute, or more specific where individuals would be named directly. The screenshots below highlight both of these examples that were mentioned.



Other than monitoring who had responded to the task, Greg and Barry would rarely interact with the players over the clips that were posted into the group chat. The players

would self-police the group to ensure that the same point was not repeated. When a repetition did occur, whoever had repeated the clip would be made to find a new point that had not yet been made by anybody. A couple examples of when this happened can be seen in the following screenshots.



When discussing the homework, a player (Josh) mentioned that there were both positive and negatives of being able to see other people's comments and answers. On the one hand you can see what people are doing, but on the other hand if you can't do the homework straight away it becomes harder to find clips and points that have not already been made.

*I think it's positive that you can all see what everybody's doing at the time, what people are adding and I think it's good cause it kind of forces people to go onto the video and it's good that people have to write a reason down*

*because it means they have to have thought about it, so you've got the element of seeing people's homework knowing that they're going onto the video and that they've had to think about what they're writing, rather than just this was a timeout. They have to come up with an explanation as to why. This sounds like a negative, but it is and it isn't, people will go, as soon as the homework comes, as soon as they get an opportunity some people will go and do it straight away, so get it over and done with straight away which is great. Yeh, they've done it, but only because they know that if you're the last three people to find a video clip of the same comment you're going to struggle because you see all the answers don't you? Oh somebody's already done that one, you didn't check and then you found one that somebody's already done, which means you're not watching what people have done and if you weren't in your house with your laptop and you were out two days training or away, you come back and you're the last one to find a clip or there's not a good enough one, it's kind of a little bit of difficulty around that.*

Barry was keen to outline some of the issues that he had encountered during the homework process, for example when videoing clips there was often background noise, or the quality wasn't very good.

*And there have been technological issues cause they're videoing it on their phones from the computers, sometimes you can hear the family chatting in the background and EastEnders is on. You know, watching them on my phone isn't the best of ways to do it, so there could also be improvements there. Sometimes the quality of it is just horrendous, so I can't even find it.*

Furthermore, he wanted to challenge the players to ensure that they were not lazy with the comments they were making about the video. His reasoning for this was that the players are playing matches at the elite level and therefore the level of work they do should be at this level too.

*I think just challenge them when they're being lazy or you know not taking it seriously and, you know, they can do that themselves as well. Sometimes I just feel people are a bit lazy on their comment, you know, 'good key defence' that to me isn't saying anything new. I wanna know, why they're good at their key defence? What was it that you saw that you think we should be doing better? So shit would be harsh, but at the elite level that's the quality of feedback that they should be able to give.*

Other challenges that Greg and Barry faced included different players posting their comments at different periods over the course of a week. From their point of view, it would have been easier to review all the clips and comments in one go, but this sometimes proved challenging.

*If you give them homework that they post up you know over a week you're going to be getting a dozen different messages all the time, sometimes you just want to be able to sit down and watch them all.*

To overcome this challenge, Greg explained how he organised the video clips and comments and then used these to help structure either the classroom session or the on-court session (and sometimes both).

*I review all the clips and then actually write down all the clips and what they've said in those clips. I'm just trying to think of a good example, so I think the clips we did for the last camp, I went through the videos, I went through all the comments and then I basically put a list of all the comments and how many were repeated and so I look for a theme within the comments. Then I will look for video to compliment that or I will structure the session and structure the on-court session that reflected what those comments were.*

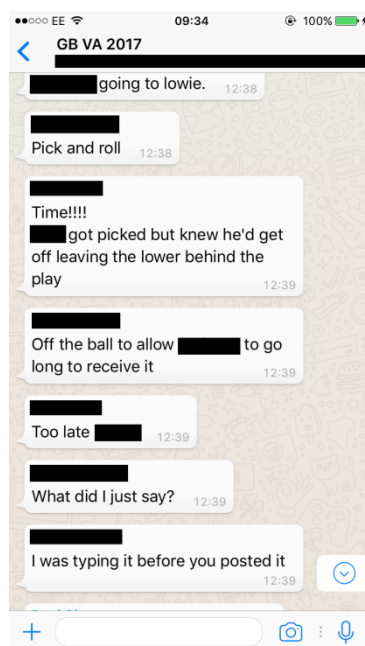
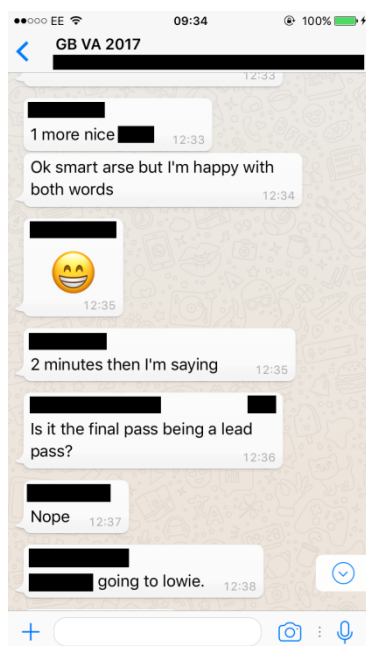
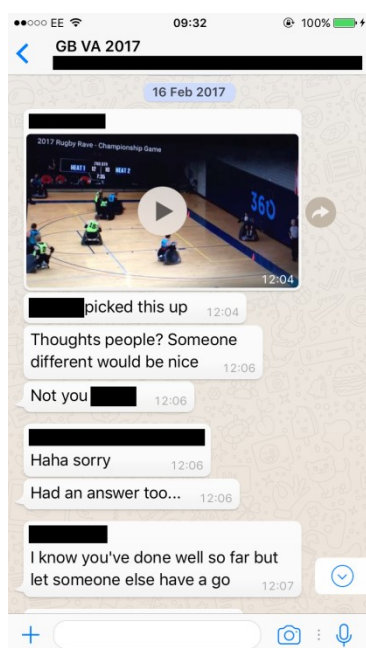
Additionally, Greg was aware that some of the players felt that he monitored what was happening in the group and they wanted more of a contribution to the discussion from Greg and Barry around the videos that were posted within the group.

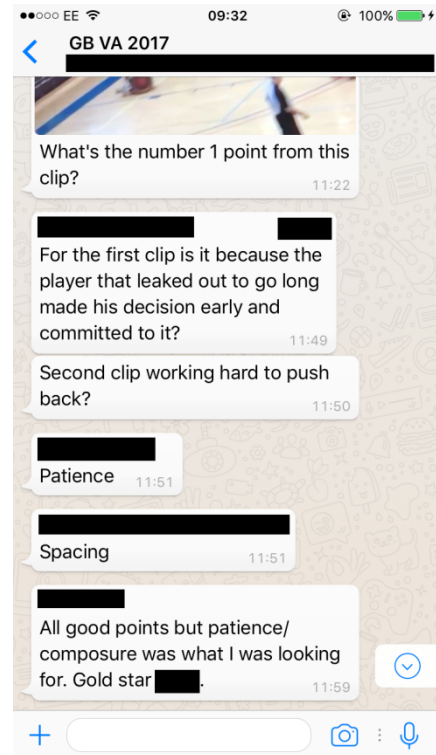
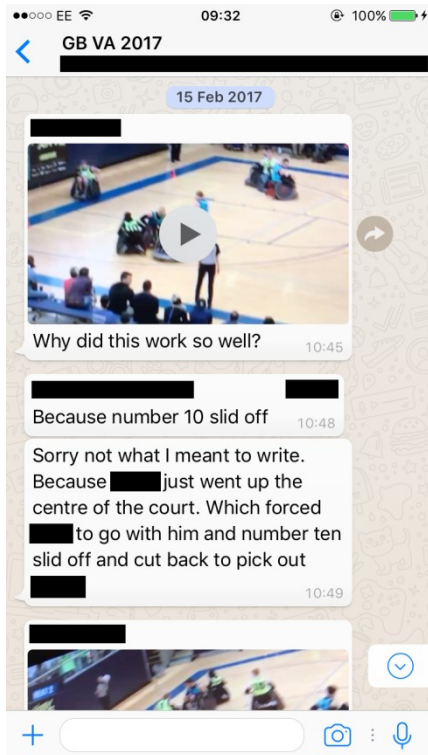
*I always read everything that's said, I don't monitor, I just tend to take it in, but it's interesting that I've read a few comments from people saying they wish I was a bit more involved in the group.*

In order to try and demonstrate to the players that he did take in the comments they made during the homework tasks, Greg actually showed the players comments as part of the classroom session.

*What I have done in the past is actually put the comments they've put in the VA group up on a screen, to show them that 1. I'm looking at what they're doing but 2. You know, how can we address what they're doing compared to what we're doing.*

Since the Rio Paralympics, the dynamic of the video-analysis homework tasks has been changed by Greg. Instead of setting a broad question and getting video clips and explanations from all players within the squad, Greg now posts a video clip into the group and asks the players questions about the clip he has posted. This new style of interacting with the players can be seen in some of the screenshots below and on the next page.





The change in the dynamic around the homework task post Rio was commented on by the Psychologist (Sam) during the interview process. His thoughts on how the homework changed can be seen in the following quotes.

#### Sam

*What's been interesting to me is how this has now evolved onto WhatsApp and how they're now using WhatsApp video clips. I don't have any involvement in that and I haven't suggested to Greg that he does that, but I've noticed the degree of participation is quite high. So, he puts a clip on WhatsApp and says 'what's wrong with this?' or 'what do you think of this?' and then he'll get quite a good number of players coming in with their thoughts, so he gets quite good engagement via WhatsApp and its immediate. It's good immediate feedback and I suppose it's easy for the players to do and it doesn't require him to get in a room with everybody.*



When questioned as to why he thought this new process with the homework seemed to be working so well with the players, Sam went on to explain that:

*I think it's the instantaneous nature so he might say 'I want you to all go away and spend an hour watching the game and then come back having clipped two or three clips that you think illustrates certain points'. Onus is probably the wrong word cause these are professional sports people and they should have time to do this, but it does put some onus on the players each to go away and do it. Some were dedicated, like Mark would be dedicated, in doing that, others just wouldn't, so what you're then doing is your setting yourself up for battles with people that don't do it. So what he's said 'don't go away, I'm going to clip interesting clips and just give them to you and what I want is your engagement immediate engagement in thinking about them'. So I think there is a bit of spoon feeding going on, but it's spoon feeding in a way that I think he's getting the maximum sort of engagement out of the players. It's quite clever what he's doing and I haven't spoken to him about that, but when I think about it, it's just an extension of some of things we have spoken about, which is to provide shorter, more meaningful clips in meetings, and rather than get the players to analyse an hour and 20 minutes of video, to give them shorter clips to analyse in meetings and he's just extended that to outside of meetings. So I think he's understood I suppose the psychology of young men who have got better things to do in their life than watch long videos, even though they are professional sports people who in theory should have all this time, he's spoon feeding just enough to then get engagement.*

Sam went on to explain how this new approach could also be less work for Greg, as he no longer has to review all the different players' videos because they are all watching the same video that he has picked.

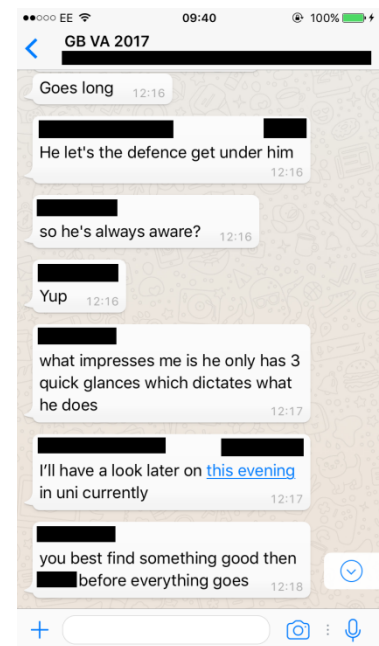
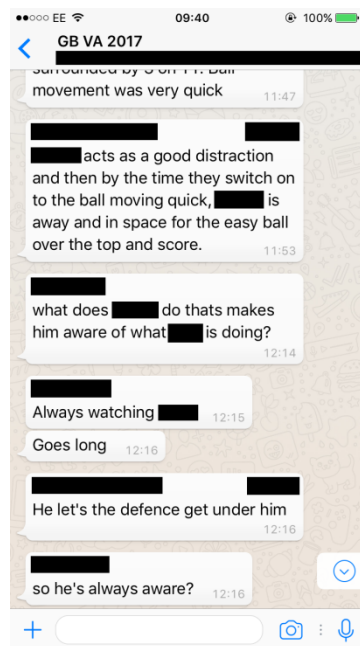
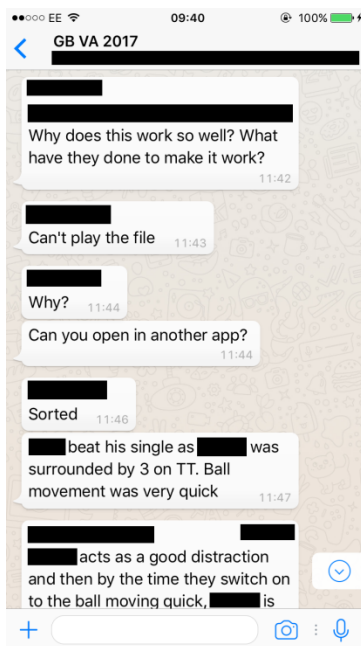
*If you think about it, it was all a lot less focused cause he might say 'go and watch the video and then bring me back your thoughts with some clips to*

*highlight it' he's actually generating an awful lot of work for himself in trawling through what they've picked and why they've picked it and what point they're making and so on, whereas this way round he's driving it. It's less work for him, he gets better engagement from the players and he is able to make the key points that he wants to make. So I would say he's been quite smart about that. I haven't spoken to him about doing the WhatsApp thing, I think that's just evolved and it's been quite clever the way that's evolved and I don't know if you're on that group, but you see the level of engagement it's pretty high and you get a reasonable number of different people coming on as well.*

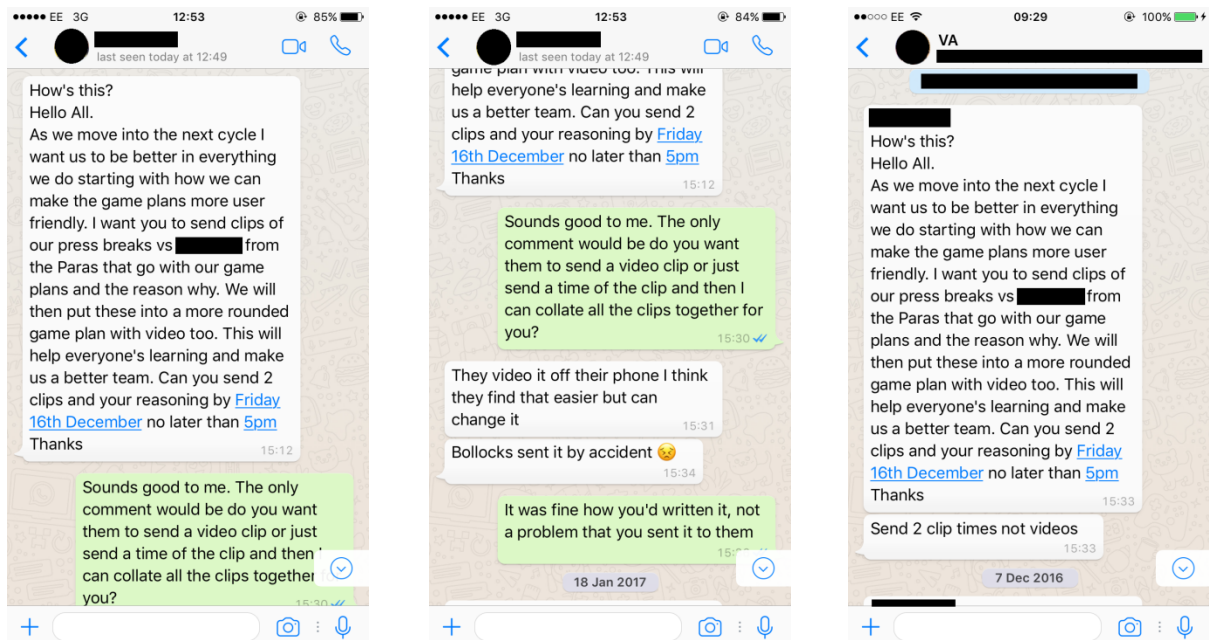
When looking at a recent interaction that had occurred within the WhatsApp group, Sam commented that:

*I'm just looking through it now and I think organising 12 or 15 players to all be free at the same time is going to be a stretch. I'm just looking through see what names come up, so there is still a core of players who are commenting and what's interesting is some of the more reflective players might come in 3 days later, like at the weekend when they've got some time and give a very considered comment. So I think he's either accidentally or on purpose, probably accidentally, appealing to different learning styles and the pace that people work at, so some people will watch a clip and will have an instant response and other people may watch a clip, or may want to watch a clip at their leisure, then have a think about it and then send quite a considered response, so in some ways if he's doing it once a week it does cater for both those groups, which is quite clever. I'm just looking here, yeh he's got maybe 6 or 8 people commenting in the moment and then 2 or 3 people coming along with their thoughts later on, so he is getting quite a range of people commenting. You could argue he's getting a greater engagement here than he would do in a meeting where everyone seats there shuffling around looking at their feet.*

In a previous screenshot, Greg asked an individual not to respond to the question in order to allow other people to answer. Furthermore, Greg will now ask specific people to respond to the questions he poses in order to make sure that everybody in the group is contributing and the same people aren't always answering the questions. This feels slightly similar to the way that Greg and Barry used to monitor who had responded when the previous style of homework was being used. Once again, examples of when Greg behaved in this manner are shown in the screenshots below.



However, there was also an occasion when Greg posted a message into the WhatsApp group by mistake. He had sent me a private message to ask for my opinion about the question he was asking and then copied the message into the WhatsApp group and pressed send before making any changes. The personal exchange, as well as the accidental message in the group, can be seen in the following screenshots.



Whilst this was not a major error by Greg, in future he made sure that this mistake was not repeated. This was a particularly important lesson for him to learn, as he could have accidentally posted a message in the group about an individual, who is a member of the group, which was meant as a private message for another member of staff.

During the interviews with the players, questions were asked about the homework, such as how individuals felt about it, and what were the good and bad aspects of it. Whilst some of these responses have been integrated already within the data, some other topics that were discussed are outlined in the following interview extracts. Adam began by outlining how the homework is set out and the level of feedback they get from Greg and Barry.

*We were essentially given a question and a source of where we could find the answer and then we had to post our answers with that clip. If somebody had done something incorrect or hadn't understood the question there would have been feedback to the person saying 'you're looking at the wrong things you need to look at these things' but not a great deal of feedback initially no, if any to be quite honest.*

Furthermore, he went on to explain that the feedback during the WhatsApp group wasn't always necessary, but it would be good for Greg and Barry to make reference to the clips and comments made during the homework tasks when they use them within their coaching sessions.

*I don't think there needs to be a massive amount of interaction with it, because I think they then go on and use the information that we obtained from the games or the clips or whatever and then use it within their own understanding of how we should then press them in future or how we should press break and stuff like that. So I think referencing them when they're trying to teach us stuff, when they're trying to tell us how we've been pressing they could reference a clip perhaps. When we're doing stuff and they're wanting us to do something in a different way, you know, reference a clip that they've seen or somebody's put on the VA group. Then I'm sure people will think 'ah you know what I found that clip', it just gives people a bit more confidence about what they're actually finding and putting up in the group itself.*

On the occasions when Greg and Barry showed all the video clips that the players had found during the homework task to the athletes during a classroom session, Mark felt that they did not always learn from these videos and more coaching was required during the session rather than just playing the video clips.

*Quite a lot of the time we might have been asked to find one good clip about what we've done and one bad clip about what we've done, so then they would collate them all and put all the good clips together and put all the bad clips together to show us what the group had done and we can discuss that a little bit further. Sometimes we've come out of that and we've still not really learnt anything from it, yeh we've watched it, but we've not actually put right what is going wrong.*

When Mark was asked about the ease of finding a relevant video during the homework tasks, he explained that sometimes it depended upon how much match time the individual had within competitions. However, he went on to explain that he didn't think Greg and Barry wanted to make the tasks long or difficult for the players, but it was about getting people to watch more of the sport away from the training camps.

*For me, personally, I'm fortunate enough that I've had quite a lot of court time so I can pretty much go to any game and find something that I've done. It is very dependent on what they ask, but generally it does not take too long and that's why it's quite frustrating when people don't do the homework, cause I've probably got one of the busiest lives out of a lot of people and I still manage to find time and people still don't do it. I don't think the homework is there to necessarily take up a lot of your time, it's there to get you thinking. It's more to get people watching the rugby, I think, rather than actual homework. It's just a way of getting them to do something outside of camp.*

However, this does not mean that the players should not be informative with the comments that they make. Mark commented that,

*It's very easy to not do it or put a half-hearted comment down that's not really well thought about.*

Adam explained that the players perhaps need to take more responsibility and not just add a commentary for what occurs during the clip but explain in more detail how it can be useful for the squad to improve.

*I think there's also a habit of when people are adding descriptions about specific clips they tend to just describe what's happening and everybody can actually see what's happening. This is a more of a player thing, players need to be more informative about description and information that they're putting alongside clips cause otherwise they're just talking through what they can actually see which is a bit pointless.*

#### 4.6 'We don't get to practice this enough':

##### **Integrating video into training**

As well as the use of technology to carry out homework tasks, Head Coach (Greg) and Assistant Coach (Barry) were keen to integrate more technology into their coaching practice, but only if it had the potential to improve the team. Therefore, they were keen to see if I was able to suggest anything that would be able to assist them with this request, as my following reflexive account indicates.

##### Reflexive account

*With the Rio Paralympics slowly getting closer and Greg and Barry aware of me occasionally assisting with another elite sport too, they came to me and asked if I knew of anything used in other sports that could potentially help them improve as well. I felt like I had been put on the spot a little bit, but then realised that perhaps the way that some of the other coaches incorporated video into their training sessions could be of value. Therefore, I started talking about how they used a TV monitor when the athletes were training which allowed Greg and Barry to review work with the athlete there and then as the video was on a 30-second delay. Therefore, the athletes were able to perform, chat about it with the coach and then look at it on the screen too, this aided them to make small changes and see any differences between each repetition of a technique.*

*I suggested that a similar set up could potentially aid them if we set up a projector beside the court and had a long HDMI cable to my computer on the balcony it would allow Greg and Barry to bring in the athletes and quickly highlight certain aspects of play during a training session, rather than having to wait for the evening meeting. In my opinion, Greg and Barry didn't seem too sure about how this could be adopted within the sport to begin with, as the sport is quite fluid during gameplay. I suggested that it didn't have to be used all the time in every session, but perhaps when smaller intricacies were being worked on and sessions were more stop-start it could be a good*



*opportunity to try and assist the players with some video footage too. Greg and Barry seemed keen to try this idea as it could potentially help them, and adopted the stance of if it didn't work it could always not be used again in the future. Therefore, I left them to discuss the logistics of how they would fit it into their training sessions, without players complaining of getting too cold or being sat around for too long without doing anything on the court. At Greg and Barry's request, I went away and bought an HDMI cable that would be suitable for reaching a projector set up beside the court from the balcony where I filmed.*

*During the following training camp Greg and Barry spoke to the staff and requested a screen to be brought to the sports hall so that we could use for the week to project the video onto. I set up the projector and connected it to my laptop via the HDMI cable I had purchased and went up to my viewing position on the balcony. Greg and Barry were working on a specific part of the game (key attacks and defence) and were down the far end of the sports hall, throughout the first 10-minute block of the session Greg would occasionally look over to me and ask me to clip certain plays for him to review. At the end of the 10-minute block he gathered all the players around the screen and asked me to play the clips he had asked for. Due to being sat up on the balcony, and Greg being rather quiet, it was not particularly easy to hear his instructions on what to do with the video (rewind, play in slow motion etc). Therefore, sometimes a louder player would shout up for him so I could hear the instruction properly. I felt like this set up needed to be improved upon so I could hear the instructions straight from Greg and so repositioned my laptop so that I was sat closer to the edge of the balcony and able to hear the conversation below slightly clearer – however there were still occasions when the instructions were not always perfectly clear and Greg had to repeat them to me.*

*This process of filming, clipping videos and then reviewing them was then repeated a further two to three times for each 10-minute block of drills. I thought that perhaps the players might benefit more from seeing it immediately after rather than having to wait until the end of the session and made a note to suggest that to Greg and Barry at the end of the training*

*session. Also, it would have meant that the players would have been sat around the screen for less time and cooled down less and it may have meant that Greg and Barry wouldn't have allow such a big discussion to occur with lots of players wanting to have their opinions heard. However, I could understand why they had not done this straight away as it could have made the sessions very stop-start and it was a new tool that I had not seen used with the players before.*

After the use of a screen and video had been trialled at the training camp, the players were consulted about the idea of utilising the video in training more often. Their reaction to the idea can be seen below, which is an extract from the team meeting.

#### Audio recording

*Barry: We're essentially going to go round the bus. I think we are getting good in terms of giving both personal reflections and reflections on, you know, how any sessions went, or a decision that me and Greg are making. We are sort of aware that we are getting pretty close to the Para's, so any questions you've got ask them, try and ask them constructively and that will help us answer them constructively. And just to remind everyone the purpose of this camp was to practice the high low line, put that high low line under pressure and look at all the different offence and defensive aspects that we expect of them. I'll start with you Adam*

*Adam: The targets that we wrote on the whiteboard, I put inbounding and controlling the 0.5 or another Lowie [an abbreviation for a low point classification player]. I don't think I've really improved much on that controlling I think that's something that I need to work on, inbounding was ok. The video analysis on the big whiteboard that we did in there I thought that was an excellent way of getting together after we've just done a drill and just reviewing it quickly, I took a lot from that, I thought it was a really good way to learn and I hope we use it more.*

*Barry: Ok, Cameron*

*Cameron: Ermm, yeh I really like the board stuff with the VA. I was just thinking about how we could make it a little bit better, say if you were running a line up or for the morning you did three 10-minute blocks maybe make the first block a little more broken up so they see the video a lot more after each play maybe, because I think they were still making the same positional errors coming up to the third set and if you break it down by the time they get to the third set they just run and they get what they get, but it's a really good tool man, it's really good. Watching myself as well just on key defences looking at your positioning and things you can improve so yeh it was good.*

*Barry: I mean on that we actually discussed if we did the key attacks at the near end where the video is that might make it more possible to look at the screen*

*Ian: Yeh, as long as you don't smash into the table with the projector on!*

*Laughter*

*Barry: Anything else?*

*Cameron: Nah, that's it I think*

Following this response from the players, the staff requested a permanent whiteboard to be installed on the wall below the balcony (which is where I set up to film the training sessions). This whiteboard would then be used at all subsequent training sessions to play videos onto during certain aspects of the session that Greg wanted to share with the players.

#### Interview data

When interviewing the Psychologist (Sam) about the use of video-based feedback during coaching sessions he admitted that he had not been directly involved with the

process. However, Sam had been having conversations with players about what they wanted from Greg and Barry, before relaying that information on to them.

#### Sam

*I haven't been directly involved in that at all, but I have discussed with Greg in the past the benefits of him doing it. So I haven't seen it in action, but I've discussed with Greg the benefits of that and this has been driven from the players talking to me about how frustrated they get with the coaching staff. And the coaches are picking up on that and asking me what they can do to sort of bridge that gap, and a clear message that came back over the past two, three years was the players want to be coached. And what I mean by that is they talk about wanting a coach who provides intervention and discipline and you know they don't just want to be shown something and then maybe practice something and then just do a game where they then try it out and then it's reviewed in the evening, they want a quicker feedback loop.*

Therefore, whilst not stating exactly what Greg and Barry should do, Sam gave them something to think about and consider how they could improve their coaching sessions. As explained earlier, Greg and Barry then came and asked me for assistance, without directly mentioning the issue they were hoping to solve. When asked about what types of frustrations the players were discussing with him, Sam said:

*So the players generally have been speaking about coaches that stop games and tell everyone to stay where they are and then talk through with them, "why are you here? Why are you here? What were you trying to achieve?" You know like blow their whistle and stop the game. I don't necessarily think Greg has been comfortable in doing that, he may be getting more comfortable in doing that, but I've certainly talked to Greg about this idea of*

*a short feedback loop, so rather than they do it and then in the evening they review it, can they review it in the moment?*

After the players had made positive comments during the team meeting about the use of video-based feedback within the on-court coaching sessions, the topic was further investigated during the interview process. As the first person to bring up the topic within the meeting, Adam was more than willing to discuss why he felt it was such a positive tool for Greg and Barry to use and hoped it would continue to be used in the future.

#### Adam

*Because it's immediate, if you can get clips that are less than 10 minutes old onto a board and people watch what they're doing, it's immediate and you can then stop bad habits and you can stop them quickly because if someone's doing the same stuff over and over and over and over for like a week and then like a week after that they get a video of footage of them doing something and it's like 'oh you need to stop doing that' it's a bit late by then. So I think it's a very good tool to have and will hopefully be able to use it more.*

When asked about what circumstances it should be used in, Adam went on to state that:

*I think it should only be used in specific circumstances, where something quite obvious is being done badly, or being done well and they want to either pick somebody up on something, or you can reinforce a good behaviour there by showing it and say 'look that is excellent', that's the sort of stuff you can reinforce. And you can pick people up on bad behaviours quickly, you might also have to do that within a group, but, you know it's learning quickly and like I say it can knock bad habits on the head.*

Other players who were interviewed also seemed positive about utilising video-based feedback within coaching sessions more in the future. Simon commented that he had requested it to be used more in the end of year review questionnaires, which the players fill in to provide feedback to staff.

#### Simon

*I actually put this in my questionnaire, on the bit where it says 'what do you want us to continue doing next year?' Video analysis on-court because say you're doing a key attack, I think it's good to see it straight away so you can correct it cause there's no point seeing it in 3 days or a week later because you don't have a chance to fix it. I think being able to watch it and fix it straight away is massive and you're going to learn more from it and get things right faster. I think when you watch it at night-time you're having to wait a whole session to put it right and then you might not even do the same drill or anything like that, so you might have to wait til the next camp to put it right and by the time it gets to the next camp it's probably gone out your head cause you've had another million and other things to do, so to correct it straight away is important I think.*

Josh added that he liked how the video was relevant to what was being worked upon during the sessions, but was wary of spending too much time reviewing the video footage during the coaching sessions as people may cool down too much or feel left out if they're having to review footage that they aren't in.

#### Josh

*I think that's good cause that's super relevant at the time. I think they're good ones those, as long as we get back to the floor soon cause nobody likes to hang around for too long cause we get cold or people haven't done anything. Then they're chatting about stuff they haven't done and then they*

*don't go back on and do stuff, so I like the idea and I think it should be done.  
Yeh, it's definitely a good one to do.*

When these potential issues were raised with Pete, he suggested that depending on the content of the video and who Greg and Barry wanted to improve, you could vary who was required to actually see the footage. Overall, he seemed very positive towards the idea and would like it to be utilised more in the future. Pete even suggested that if he went on to have a career in coaching that it would be a technique which he would look to employ himself.

#### Pete

*Sometimes you could get just a couple of people in, sometimes you could get a line, sometimes you could get the whole squad. I really like it. I'm probably more excited about going in to watch a video whilst I'm on-court, rather than I am going into a classroom meeting, because you're able to see it and then go out and fix it there and then. Yeh, I just really like it in every way and the more we can do it the better. I think if I'm ever coaching I'd be using that a lot, it's priceless. You can get people involved as well. I think that's the best part about it, you can just say 'what have you seen there? How was he doing that so well?' and you can't argue with it. Then there's always little bits that you can add, which I find help. I think it's good because you've got your proof there and you've got the other style of learning, so you've got the watching the person, explaining what you want them to do and then you've got the practice after with the video to refer to again so I do like that way. I would like to teach that way, so I'd also like to be taught that way.*

## 4.7 'The disagreement':

### The coaches disagree in front of the players

Whilst the Head Coach (Greg) and Assistant Coach (Barry) were beginning to implement video-based feedback within their on-court coaching sessions, they still held team meetings during the evening to either go over video with the squad from the training sessions that day, or discuss game plans for upcoming competitions, or review the entire training camp. During one particular team meeting, the squad were reviewing some video clips from that days training and Barry was leading the session. However, during this meeting Barry and Greg had a difference of opinion over what to do in a certain situation. The following reflexive account outlines the details of what occurred during the session.

#### Reflexive account

*It was a normal team meeting; I was sat at the front table next to Greg with Barry on his other side and the whiteboard behind us. All the players were gathered in the room, some had gotten out of their day chairs and onto the sofas or chairs around the room, others had stayed in their chairs, but all of them were facing the front and ready for the meeting to begin. Greg had already had a quiet word with Barry on the way to the meeting and asked him if he was ok to deliver the content for the upcoming meeting, which he had agreed to do. I was unsure what the meeting was going to be about, but the coaches had obviously discussed it with each other and knew what they wanted to get from the meeting. Barry explained to the players that they were going to review some video footage and then discuss certain situations that had arisen in the videos and either what had gone well or what needed in future if that situation was to arise again in the future. This all seemed fairly normal and like other meetings that had been held in the past.*

*Due to my role within the team, I had all the clips for Greg and Barry on my laptop and this was connected to the projector, so the players could view*



*them on the whiteboard. I sat next to them as I took instructions from either Greg or Barry about when to play the clip, what speed to play it at and when to rewind or pause it. Occasionally if the clip was being talked about by one of the players they would ask me to move the video to a certain point of play it at a certain speed while they gave their opinion too. It was a situation that I was used to and felt fairly comfortable with, as long as my laptop and Dartfish behaved properly for me and didn't crash on me I was happy. However, on the few occasions I had trouble with Dartfish or the projector I definitely felt under pressure as if it was my fault that the equipment wasn't working properly, but nobody ever told me this, it was just the personal pressure that I put on myself to do the job to the best of my ability. Today, it seemed like all the equipment was behaving properly, Dartfish was working well and the projector wasn't cutting out. This meant that I could just focus on listening to the instructions from the coaching team.*

*The first few clips were shown and Barry was engaging with the group and asking for opinions about what they thought of the different situations and how it had been handled and what could be changed if it occurred again in the future. The players seemed to be responding positively, even if a negative clip was shown, and were providing constructive comments on how they could improve in future. Greg and Barry would sometimes give their opinion on what they wanted before opening it up to the players for their thoughts too, or alternatively they would not give their opinion and just listen to what the players had to say.*

*After the next clip was shown Barry asked the players for their opinions on what they had just seen and a few of the usual voices were more than happy to give their opinion. Barry then asked a few people who had been fairly quiet up until that point what their opinions were too. One of these players made a comment which then prompted another player to ask a question to the coaches about what they had seen. Barry looked towards Greg to see if he was going to answer this question but when it appeared that he was not going to give an answer Barry gave his opinion. The way in which he spoke made it sound like they had discussed this situation before the meeting and that they were both agreed on what he was saying. However, once he had*

*finished talking, Greg disagreed with what he had just said and gave an alternative opinion.*

*I felt uneasy sitting next to Greg and Barry when they had just disagreed with each other, but it was not an unfamiliar situation as it had happened in the past too. However, previously they had said openly to the group that they had disagreed when viewing a clip but eventually came to a joint point of view as to the best way forwards. On this occasion they had actually disagreed with each other in front of the group. Most people went a bit quiet, whilst the player that had asked the question looked a bit confused and unsure on which answer he was supposed to take away from the meeting. Barry looked flustered as he clearly wasn't expecting Greg to intervene like that during the meeting, especially after he had just given the players an answer that he thought was correct. There was no more discussion around the point from either the players or the coaches and after a brief period of silence Barry asked me to move onto the next clip.*

*The rest of the meeting carried on in the same fashion as before the disagreement, albeit with a bit more tension in the air. However, whenever Barry went to answer a question he seemed a bit more hesitant and glanced to his side to check with Greg that the answer he was giving was adequate and one that he agreed with. I noticed that the players did not seem shocked by this kind of situation and they didn't comment about it either, at least not in the meeting in front of the group. I bet they would talk about it amongst themselves after the meeting, probably laughing at what had happened, but at least it wasn't my mistake and me that they would be laughing at.*

Unfortunately, there was not an audio recording of the team meeting that has just been described, but on another occasion, during a camp debrief, a couple of the players did comment about similar situations occurring with Greg and Barry. This was mentioned during a meeting that was being recorded, and therefore, the transcript for what happened can be seen in the following extract.

## Audio recording

*Greg: So we just want to go round the bus tonight and pick up on anything people want to bring up and maybe we can rectify it for tomorrow. That feedback is always welcome. And also think about the objectives we worked on this week so it was the two lines working on key offence, defence and press breaks, ok? So we will start with Cameron first please*

*Cameron: Can you start that way cause I'm still thinking*

*Greg: Ok who's got a point? Ok, Mark*

*Mark: Yeh I've got one it's not necessarily game related as such but it was brought up at the camp in the first meeting Elliot brought up a good question ermm about managing the clock and we've sort of parked that question but I think it's not going to be highlighted and thought about and we're not going to have any sort of answer to it and I think we've done it a lot I think sometimes we say that's for a different time we haven't got time to mention it and I do think we need to record and make a real effort to come back to it whether it's in a different discussion on its own or as coaches you go away and discuss it and come back to us with exactly what you want in certain situations*

*Pause while point was written up on whiteboard by Nathan*

*Greg: Anyone else? Next one*

*Elliot: I'll go ... it was a good opportunity for the line that was run today without Ben running against it, it gave it an opportunity to develop against not such a strong line, I think whether it's by accident or not but I think it gave them a bit of a platform and a bit of confidence cause I think it went quite well, so I think that was good value. Negative wise I think sometimes you're sort of although you're working together you've got separate views on things and ... whether I think you should either discuss and talk about the situation but sometimes you look a bit disjointed by situations that happen*

*Barry: Is that stuff about sort of tactical skills or technical stuff or is that ermm how we're going to run this drill sort of thing*

*Elliot: Ermm, I think it's happened not just this camp but over different camps it's not going to ... it's not massively bad for us as a group it's not going to hold back our development but I think it's almost looks a little bit fractured and I don't think it gives a good impression and it you have just a little bit of hearsay 'well fucking hell he's doing this and he's doing that' and I don't think it's very professional. You'll have mistakes sometimes, well you'll have a difference of opinion and that's good that you're challenging each other but I think it needs to be ... I think you need to back each other ... I don't think it's very professional in the nicest kind of way*

*Barry: Is there an example*

*CR: Today it happened in the pick and roll drill*

*Barry: Right*

*CR: It was just a little intricacy*

*Elliot: Mine was more I think I said are we being coached I shouted over and I think you responded just saying no so I was like right ok ... so I took charge and briefed everybody and then I think Greg came over and was like well this is what you're doing and I was like you know you've made me feel a bit of a dick by briefing the team and think everybody's also like I think again the guys that were there felt well that wasn't very professional*

*Barry: I think these examples are really important cause if it's not an example and you say we're unprofessional, cause we do prepare a lot*

*Elliot: Oh I know that*

*Barry: And there's areas where we fall down and if we can highlight those areas we will work on them*

*Elliot: I'm just being honest with you I'm not stabbing at anybody you know it probably sounds a lot worse than it was you know*

*Greg: Ok ...*

### Interview data

After I had witnessed the disagreement and the players brought it up and discussed another incident in a separate meeting, all participants were asked for their opinions about what had occurred. This was an opportunity to find out if this was a regular occurrence between Greg and Barry, were they aware of it happening during sessions, and was it something that they now worked together on to avoid in future meetings. Furthermore, it enabled Barry to explain how he felt during the situation and perhaps why it had occurred. The following quote outlines how he was feeling during the situation.

#### Barry

*Very stressed I would say. It may have been causing me physical pain when those things were happening, cause I knew they would happen. It's not as though if it didn't happen often and regularly and consistently, so honestly I wanted Greg to give an answer and I would wait if I didn't get an answer from him, or the squad didn't get an answer, and it felt as if there needed to be an answer I felt generally that's when I would speak up and I would try and give my opinion. But I did feel without Greg getting involved, I felt on unsafe ground I guess.*

When questioned as to why this type of situation might arise during a meeting, Barry suggested that:

*I mean we did prepare for them we did discuss them. Was there enough preparation? You know, it might have been that you were trying to prepare and plan for a lot of different sessions, so the video session might not get the attention that it deserves. There was a lot of discussing around it, but if you've got limited preparation time you need to be really decisive and I guess I found our preparations generally inconclusive and, you know, more*

*frustrating. Yeh, I didn't really have the expectation to be that well prepared for these meetings.*

While Barry felt that they had perhaps not prepared properly for the meeting, the Psychologist (Sam) agreed that could be one explanation for the difference of opinion. However, he also considered that Greg and Barry had two different approaches to how the game should be played and also how the players learned new skills and sometimes these differences of opinion would occur during video-based feedback meetings when the players were present.

#### Sam

*I have seen it. I think it gives the players mixed messages and I think it undermines the authority of the coaches. It's something I have talked to Greg about in the past, maybe not explicitly sat down and said 'right, we've got to deal with this problem', but I think it's come up from time to time. You know, as coaches it's important that they get their message straight before they get in front of the players. It's indicative of a couple of things, I think one, is just a lack of preparation time or they try and do too much, so whichever way you look at it they're putting themselves under pressure in the preparation and so they're not able to get their story straight on everything and you know perhaps some fundamental differences about the way A. the way the game should be played and B. the way players learn. I can remember Barry a few times saying things like 'he should just be able to do that', you know the player doesn't execute a skill properly Barry would say 'he should just be able to do that' and Greg would be more like 'well, if the video is showing us the player can't do it, then it's something we need to teach him' and Barry would be 'well, yeh but they should just be able to do it and we shouldn't have to be teaching that skill, we shouldn't be having to develop that skill' so Greg just came across as a more pragmatic 'look, we've got the hand we're dealt and we have to just work with that and make the best of it and develop it' whereas Barry was much more of a you know living in a world of expectation*

*of this is what I expect and when it falls short I'm going to get annoyed and I think that did come out in some of their discussions in front of the players.*

The players felt like it demonstrated a lack of preparation by Greg and Barry, or not sharing information with each other before the meeting about what was going to be discussed. In turn, this gave the squad a mixed message and some participants even suggested that the athletes could end up losing respect for Greg and Barry. The thoughts of the players can be seen in the following quotes:

Pete

*I think it was a while ago they just disagreed I think Barry said something and then Greg was like 'well, I'm not actually sure' and then it was like man that should really have been done before. If you're going to disagree about something, well you need to agree to not show that video to maintain that professionalism. You know, I think their performances are the meetings and when they deliver stuff to us, like our performances are our games, so they need to prepare for their performances. They need to prepare for it, so that means if you're two coaches watching it together and both having the exact idea of what you want, otherwise just one of you takes the session. But yeh, just the preparation really they just haven't gone through it, they've probably both picked a clip but they haven't gone through it together.*

Mark

*I mean that means that Greg didn't have a clue about what Barry was going to do that evening, he's gone away and he's done it all so he's got it all but he's not passed it through Greg, they've not even discussed whether what Barry been doing is what Greg wants at all. So yeh, it just shows it's not been prepared. I don't mind if he's come out and said 'no, that's definitely what I don't want, I want this' that's what we need more of. If he was to come out and say 'oh, I'm not too sure about that, I think this' then that's where it gets*

*complicated, cause they've you got two people that are indecisive and we need someone that's going to make a decision and sort of deliver that.*

Simon

*Yes! [laughter] I can't remember what the video clip was but it's happened one or two times when ermm when Barry said something and Greg has gone 'no it should have been done like this'. You lose a little bit of respect if I'm being honest, because you don't think they've planned it properly because they should already know what they're going to say before they go in. I think the situation was somebody asked a question and then Barry answered it and Greg didn't agree with his answer. One opinion or it gets confusing for the players cause who do they listen to? Do they listen to Barry or do they listen to Greg? It just confuses a player and it makes a player think that they haven't planned the session properly.*

Adam

*If there is a coach and an assistant coach they should both be telling us exactly the same thing that they want from us. There should be no disagreement there. If there's disagreement then that needs to be addressed during the planning stage of the session, rather than the lesson because to have a disagreement in front of all of the players is a little ... That should not happen if I'm honest. If the Assistant and Head Coaches are both trying to get across their idea then almost arguing in front of the players is not a good thing, so neither of them are actually sure of what they're doing.*

Josh, who had not been present at the meeting when the disagreement occurred, described how Greg and Barry sometimes explained that they had different opinions when watching the video clips, but then came to a decision on which opinion would work best and would be shared with the players.



Josh

*I have heard in times gone by the Assistant Coach will say something like 'we ummed and ahhed and disagreed about this one for a while', but that does generally happen during any meetings. Cause we'll [the players] say one thing and someone will say another point of view on say a clip of something and Coach and Assistant will say 'yeh, we did disagree about this for a long time as well, but we came to this ...' It's a little bit like X Factor, you know we had a big discussion about it but we came to the decision to keep this as our answer.*

Additionally, a couple of the players shared how they would feel and react to such an event unfolding during the meeting. Both of them felt like most people in the meeting would be quiet while Greg and Barry try to resolve the situation. However, the consequences of their actions might spill out of that meeting, with players either talking about it amongst themselves later, or checking to see if the coaches are in agreement when information is shared with players in future.

Pete

*Initially in quite a quiet way, you know I doubt people will say much. They'll probably let them try and sort it out between them. Sometimes you try and play the peacemaker or something, but generally I think people are a little bit like ... You know, they're probably a little bit frustrated about it happening and they'll let them play it out and then bitch about it after.*

Adam

*To be perfectly honest, as a player, be quiet because you're then thinking 'well ok, if the coaches are disagreeing who is right', so I would keep quiet and wait for it to be resolved you know hopefully there and then. I say that it would probably make me think to question them a bit more, which doesn't mean to say I wouldn't trust them or listen to them, or you know listen to*

*their advice, or their information they're trying to give me. I think it just means I would probably take a second more to understand what they're trying to say, because you'll probably get a situation where you get told something say by Greg and look over at Barry and see if he's nodding.*

#### 4.8 'This is unacceptable!':

##### **The performance director interrupts a game-plan meeting**

As the Rio Paralympics drew closer tension within the squad and staff members was increasing, the pressure was building up and was beginning to take its toll on everyone. This was evident with the Head Coach (Greg) and Assistant Coach (Barry) having a disagreement in front of the athletes, as well as the Performance Director (Matt) interrupting a game-plan meeting to give their opinion on the situation. The following narrative outlines what occurred during the meeting, which has been constructed with the use of a reflexive account and audio recording of the meeting.

##### Reflexive account and audio recording

*It was a normal evening team meeting, we'd all had dinner together and then Greg, Barry and I had gone to the meeting room ahead of the players to set up ready for the meeting. As usual, I asked them how they wanted the room set up and then began moving the chairs away from the tables and stacking them out of the way at the back of the room. By the time I had finished doing this Greg and Barry had a table at the front of the room, with the whiteboard behind them and the tables in a U-shape for the athletes so that they were all able to sit and see them and the whiteboard. I also turned on the projector and connected it to Greg's iPad for him, I asked if there was anything he needed from me and I was told that was it for now.*

*A few minutes later the players began to come into the room and started sitting around the tables that I had arranged for them. Once everyone had arrived, I turned on my Dictaphone and began sorting out some of the video on my laptop from that day's training sessions whilst Greg and Barry outlined what the meeting was going to be about this evening.*

*I noticed that to our right-hand side as we were looking out towards the players that Matt was sat against the wall listening to what was occurring during the meeting. I didn't think anything of it to begin with as it was fairly normal for other members of staff to be present during meetings and they usually sat out of the way and got on with some of their work or listened to what was happening in the meeting.*

*Greg: We just wanted to go through the game plan but we also want to talk to you about how you want the game plan is going to look and how it is going to be the most effective for you so ermm you know we've been chatting with the fab four and getting their ideas on that and we want to get your opinion as well cause it's important that we get this right because at the end of the day we know what we want you to do but do you know by reading the game plan what we want you to do ... so which ever we need to do it we need to make sure everybody can understand it for when they go on-court ... so ... so we set the game plans up and we send them out and we go through them as a team ermm ... there was one incident out in Canada Cup where Cameron was honest enough to say that he didn't look at the game plan*

*Cameron: I didn't say I didn't look at it, I said I didn't memorise it all*

*Greg: Ahh ok ermm ... I don't want the answers now but I can imagine that he's not the only one ... so this is why we really want to get this out there and for you to really take it on board and we want to make sure it's in the right format to do that ... I think first of all you know we do this in PowerPoint how many people cannot open this PowerPoint?*

*Ben: A lot of people can open it but can't read the notes*

*Greg: Yeh ok ... so*

*Barry: Right so who can actually ermm I guess who can open up PowerPoint and get the notes hands up if you can do that ... so nobody can get PowerPoint and the notes*

*Elliot: I think it's on the phones I think is the main issue*

*Barry: Yeh*

*Adam: And on iPads as well*

*Simon: You can get it on your laptop if you've got PowerPoint software*

*Greg: Yes Matt*

*Matt: I mean obviously Greg I can put it on a PDF how many of you can open up PDFs on your phone*

*Ben: Yeh, that doesn't translate the notes section though does it*

*Matt: No, I can put half of it as pictures and half of it as notes*

*Elliot: Can we try sending it to somebody's phone and showing you what we mean*

*Matt: I can find what I sent to Greg and do that*

*Ben: I'm a little bit confused as to why we need the notes as well I thought the information was on the slides so that's the whole point ... if it's not just on the slides should we just be having more slides?*

*Elliot: More specific*

*Greg: Yeh I think what Elliot*

*Ben: Rather than these extra bits as well ... make it two slides instead of one*

*Matt: Let me send you this PDF cause here's on my phone*

*Greg: Plug it into that*

*Matt: Oh there we go*

*Elliot: into the pictures now*

*[laughter]*

*Matt: Searching ... connecting ... there you go ... so there's no notes there go through go through go through and here you go he says and there's the notes there*

*Ben: That's definitely better*

*Matt: Is that ideal?*

*Group: Yes*

*Matt: So you can send it to me I'll sort it out it won't take me too long to do that*

*Elliot: Do we have to download anything*

*Matt: Nope it's just on a PDF it's already like that it comes up like that so you can make it big and small on your phone yes*

*Oscar: Yes Matt*

*Elliot: We've been pissing about for months, you could have come months ago Matt*

*Matt had come up to the front, by Greg and Barry, and connected his phone to the projector to show the players a PDF of the game plan that he had converted from the original PowerPoint that Greg and Barry had made. The players all seemed pleased with what they were shown so Matt disconnected his phone and went back to sit down where he had been at the start of the meeting. It wasn't unusual for him to be involved within the session when asked for an opinion by either Greg or Barry, I think most people valued his knowledge and experience within the sport.*

*The meeting then continued with the players and coaches discussing the game plans and the option of potentially adding video clips to help enhance them. Or having a separate folder on Dartfish TV where the players could go to watch specific parts of the game plan to see examples of how they had been successfully carried out in the past. One of the players wasn't particularly pleased that these issues had not been sorted out sooner on within the*

*cycle and voiced this opinion to the group. It felt like tensions were rising within the room, the original point of the meeting was perhaps being lost.*

*Ben: I don't think we should mess around with this. This has been the last two years we've been using these as our*

*Greg: Well do people actually use it I guess that's the question? If I just look at this slide now, pure coincidence, side-line inbound actually you know I'm banging on about this all the time at the moment and it's been there for two years so why aren't we using it?*

*Elliot: Greg, I think we've got a lot of great tools available to us and it's good that we're trying to cover all areas I think probably most when it comes to game day you've probably had a refresh and a look but the best for me personally is to just refresh last thing*

*Greg: Refresh as a group, refresh individually?*

*Group: Line ups*

*Greg: Refresh the line ups*

*Ben: That's when most information comes in ... I'm a little worried that we're going ... trying to adjust our slides now and we've been working on them ... it's the same with our game I don't think this is the time to be messing with other things ... we should have had a system in place now that this is what we're doing*

*Greg: I'll agree with you Ben ... we've had it in place for two years ok so we're agreed on that but we have messed with it a couple of times. I still wonder whether we take in the information ... I think that's my fear at the moment when evidence probably proves no, we don't*

*Cameron: Are people out of places in presses and stuff?*

*Greg: Probably not so much personnel as such I'd say it was ... we talk this, we agree on this and then it doesn't get implemented, why doesn't it get implemented?*

*Barry: Particularly side line inbounds. Are there other major areas we could be improving?*

*I think Matt could also sense that the meeting was going off topic this and therefore decided to step in to try and get the meeting back on track. The conversation then developed around the use of the game-plans and perhaps printing off a hard copy that players would be able to look out whilst they were out in Rio, as the following transcript from the audio recordings shows.*

*Matt: I mean basically you should be able to have a blank bit of paper and everyone of you should be able to go up and write it out and describe it to everyone in the line, you should be able to do that, if you cannot do that then you need to go and study it and study it and study it and study it. I think that's what Greg is trying to say. Obviously everybody learns in a different way is there anything he can do to add to this current format which will support someone's learning, so that they can do that with their line with confidence and in being able to do it from that can then translate it when you're training so that there is a translation from knowing it to doing it.*

*Elliot: Ermm when we was in Japan we pretty much know to grab their number 4 when our number 1 is in the bin to stop them but I don't think there is any substitute to somebody verbally saying it. This is all good at pre-empting stuff, but I think all of us could definitely benefit from verbal cues maybe*

*Matt: In a noisy environment how realistic is that?*

*Elliot: I think the point I'm trying to make Matt is it's not something you're going to do all the time it's like a mechanism now to install it to plant it and all of a sudden you'd be like oh I wish he'd shut up I'm already here cause you've ingrained it so it's another way of maybe learning*

*Greg: How many people look at the game plans outside of camps and competitions?*



*Mark: Leading up to a competition*

*Greg: What's happened since Canada Cup?*

*Mark: No*

*Greg: So opposition analysis, people been doing much of that?*

*Elliot: Done a bit of US stuff on people I didn't know*

*Greg: I think Elliot you made a good point there, Matt's made a great point as well. Especially now if it's too late then ermm we need to try and do something about it, but we need to have this ingrained when we get into the first game whoever we're playing we need to know who that man is, what we're going to do against him, whichever line up that you're in you should know your job*

*Elliot: For those that watch football, sometimes when they're putting a sub on they'll have like a folder and I presume they're refreshing him*

*Barry: I mean Pete you were talking about like a hard copy maybe for everyone ... we can certainly have like a hard copy*

*Matt: The issue with hard copies is how many of you leave bits of paper lying around? I would feel really unhappy if the press said that a team have just left their playbook and you know someone's picked it up at a meeting room that everyone else has been at because you all leave stuff everywhere and that's why it's done electronically, that's why it's put on Dropbox, if you want a hard copy you can print a hard copy but you have to you know think loose lips sink ships every time. And you know the reason why the American's are pretty good is because they're used to playbooks since you know high school football, basketball they get playbooks at the age of 12 and they study those playbooks and you guys are going to the Paralympic Games you should be eating breathing on the phone to your lines sort of talking about it and yes that's intensive but you should be demanding that of your teammates. Greg shouldn't be doing it; you should be doing it yourself. You should be absolutely demanding your teammates to know your playbook if they don't know it it's not for Greg to shout at you and tell you you're a bunch of you*

*know stupid people [laughter] your teammate is saying that's not good enough I want to win a medal and I may not win a medal because you know you're only as good as your loosest link so if someone is not understanding that and buying into it and working with you as a fellow teammate to achieve that then they're letting themselves down and they're letting their teammates down. So my rant is over cause I don't think I need to do it anymore.*

*Greg: What I would say to that is ... and you know thanks Matt for that ... is just this is what we want, we want everybody to be able to learn that and how is it best for us to be able to do that*

*I felt that whilst Matt's intervention was valid and said things that the players needed to hear; it would certainly have been better if it had been said by either Greg or Barry rather than him. It seemed like he knew that the players had to be told the information and knew that Greg and Barry would not be able to do it, so took it upon himself to step in and take control of the situation. It was certainly a bit awkward once he had finished and it took a little bit of time for Greg to regain his composure and continue with the meeting.*

#### Interview data

After I had witnessed this event, I wanted to find out more information about how Greg, Barry and the players had felt when Matt interrupted. Greg explained that after the meeting they had a conversation about what had happened during the meeting and how it had actually helped him to gain confidence.

#### Greg

*He said to me 'do you think I should have said that?' and I went 'well, I was happy for you to, cause it actually gave me the confidence then to add to*

*that', whereas I might not have thought about it. Now I'm not gonna go, I won't then go and tell the players 'actually it was Matt that triggered my thoughts what I said to you', I would never say that to them.*

Whilst Greg did not mind Matt having a rant at the players, Barry realised that it was a strange situation to have occurred and he and Greg should have made sure that there was a clear strategy in place before the meeting began about the message they wanted to give to the players.

### Barry

*I mean I knew it was a weird thing to have happened and in an ideal situation it wouldn't have happened. I wasn't put out by it, but looking back on it I think we should have used that as a bit of a warning bell and tackled the issue. I mean Matt's got valid opinions and it must be fucking hard sitting there at the back of the room when you've got a lot of opinions about things that are being discussed and keeping your mouth shut and generally his interventions were rare, but you know brought up valid issues. On that particular matter, I just think that you know as coaches you've always got to look to yourself as to how memorable, how interesting, how engaging are these game plans, if the players aren't learning what can we do to change that? And I guess my attitude wasn't one of you just sort of shout at the players and say 'you should be doing better', but I know there can be a balance between the two and if Matt's the person to do the sort of that role that's fair enough, but I guess my issue was not having one clear message and one clear sort of strategy for how to get better in engagement with the game plans.*

From an alternative point of view, one of the players gave his opinion on the situation. He felt that preferably you'd want either Greg or Barry to be delivering that message to the athletes, but he understood that perhaps they weren't able to do it in a way

that the players would accept and learn from, and therefore, Matt had to step in to deliver that message.

Mark

*I think ideally you'd want the coaches to do it but Greg hasn't got it in him to do it, and Barry hasn't got the skills to deliver it in way that's it's going to be taken on-board. So yeh, it's a shame that Matt's sometimes got to jump in like that and it would be better coming from Greg, but you know that's not going to happen because it's just not in his personality to be like that. So yeh, it would have been better, I don't think it's detrimental, but it would be better coming from the coaches.*

#### 4.9 'The script writer':

##### **When the Head Coach used the Psychologist's words verbatim**

When the team were out in Rio for the Paralympic Games, I spent quite a lot of time with the Psychologist (Sam). One evening we were having a conversation and he explained to me how the Head Coach (Greg) had asked him for advice before one of the team meetings about what he should say. Sam wanted to try and help Greg and so gave him some suggestions about the sort of things he could say to the players. However, during the meeting Greg quoted exactly what Sam had suggested to him. Therefore, during an interview with Sam, questions were asked related to this event where Sam explains what occurred behind the scenes. Additionally, the following passage is the transcript from the team meeting where Greg quoted Sam's suggestion word for word.

##### Audio recording

*Greg: Morning everyone*

*General: Morning*

*Greg: How's everyone feeling?*

*Oscar: Buzzing*

*Greg: Yeh, good ... I slept like a baby last night and I think one of the reasons why I slept like a baby is because I'm so confident. I'm so confident what you're going to do today just take my confidence from me please and put it on the floor, alright?*

*Elliot: Yeh*

*Greg: Short and sharp game plan, ok? Number 1 priority on offence?*

*Ben: Get the lowies*

*Greg: Yeh. Number 1 priority on defence?*

*Mark: Don't want to give them space*

*Greg: Exactly, deny the middle. We talked about spacing last night, make sure we do that. Communication, we've got to make sure we do that. On offence, composure. Alright? If we do those things it gives us the best chance of winning this game, alright? If we go goals up, let's not take our foot off just keep what you're doing well, alright? Cause that's what's got you there in the first place. If we go goals down, what we're very good at is getting goals back. It's all about the next play. The other thing as well is if you keep that composure and you keep that intensity, they'll revert back to type which means they'll just go back to what we know they do. A great man once said 'the result of the game might define you as a player, but it's what you put into it that defines you as a person'. Everyone can't wait to see what you can do this week, go out and show them boys!*

*[Applause, cheering]*

*Oscar: Let's go!*

*Cameron: Come on boys!*

### Interview data

After having the conversation with Sam out in Rio, and then finding the audio recording of what occurred from my Dictaphone, the topic was brought up within the interview to gain further understanding around what had happened. The first extract explains, in Sam's words, what assistance Greg usually asked for before a team meeting.

### Sam

*He would say things like 'well, I'm going to show', he'd already have the video clips lined up, 'I'm going to show them this and I'm going to show them that' and I would just ask him 'well, what's the purpose of that video clip, what are*

*you trying to achieve?’ and he might say ‘well, you know, to re-emphasise how well they’ve done, or to emphasise how not to do something’. So then you could sort of say ‘well, what message do you want them to leave with? What order are you then going to do things in to give them the best chance of having that message? And then how do you set the whole session out to say this is what we’re going to do and this is why we’re doing it?’ I just try and give him that structure, but inevitably in that he might say ‘oh, I’m really struggling to know what to say’ and I would say ‘well, you could say this’ and that’s when he would write it down and then repeat it.*

The following quote demonstrates what occurred out in Rio at the Paralympics, both before the team went out to play a match as well as after a match and before the team debrief. This highlights how it was not Sam’s intention to put words into Greg’s mouth, but help him gain an overall structure for the session.

*I used to talk to him about what to say to players in the debrief sessions when we got back to the apartments, how to set the tone of that, but also how to set the tone of sessions in the changing room before games. Mainly around setting the tone so I would sit with Greg and he would talk about setting the tone of the meeting, so how he might start it off and how he might end it. There was a couple of them where I felt like almost I was writing his script for what he was going to say. I remember once, I said something to him and he said ‘oh that’s really really good’ he said ‘I’ll use that in my meeting’ and then I remember in the meeting, I can’t remember what it was I said now, but in the meeting he said ‘a wise man once said’ and then said what I’d said. I said to him afterwards ‘why did you say that?’ and he said ‘well, I thought it was wise’ [laughter]. So he was sometimes quoting me word for word with stuff, which I actually think was counterproductive because I wasn’t trying to give him that. I was trying to give him a sense of how to structure, well basically not to give him anything actually. To listen to what he wanted to do and then to help him structure that, but inevitably he might say to me ‘oh,*

*well how would you say that?’ and rather than say ‘it’s not about me, it’s about you’ if I could see he was struggling, I might say ‘well, you could say it like this or say it like that’ and give him some suggestions. But I almost became like his script writer at times, which I don’t think is as powerful as coming from himself.*

Despite Greg using Sam’s words in the team meeting, Sam did not stop providing Greg with support, but encouraged him to take the idea and develop it in his own way.

*I thought ‘well, you’re missing the point, these are meant to be your words, not mine’. I was constantly trying to encourage him, if he liked an idea I gave him, to take it and make it his, but I just don’t think he was at a level where he was able to do that at that stage.*

When asked about whether he thought the players were aware that the words were Sam’s and not Greg’s, Sam explained that:

*The players are aware that he is trying to be something and I think then the effect that has is he loses ... there’s a bit of credibility loss, cause I noticed there were a couple of sessions where he said ‘I really need something big to finish on’. For example, before the first game and maybe before the first two games actually, he wanted something big to finish on and then he said to me ‘what could I say?’ and I asked ‘what was he thinking of saying?’ and then between the two of us we might work something out. I might go away and reflect on it and then send him a WhatsApp message and say ‘could you pick up on a thing like this?’ and put some words in a WhatsApp message and then he’d come back and say ‘yeh, that sounds really good thanks’ and then in the actual session he would say word for word what I’d written in the WhatsApp message, in fact in one session he got his phone out and read it I think, but that wasn’t my intention at all. My intention was that he would*



*take the idea and make it his own and I think the players see right through that.*

Furthermore, Sam was questioned as to why he thought Greg took his words and didn't think or use his own. He thought that the reason might be related to Greg's self-doubt of his ability and therefore he looks to video clips or words from Sam to help support him during the team meetings.

*What's undermining him is his own self-doubt and once he gets to manage his own self-doubt he'll be able to be himself, but at the moment, it's like we're propping him up. He props himself up with video clips, he props himself up with words that I might give him, he props himself up with whatever props he is using. When he realises that he doesn't need those props, he'll be able to just be authentically himself and say what he believes, but at the moment he's still sort of second guessing himself and wants to be propped up.*

Finally, Sam discussed how Greg sometimes used either his phone or iPad to help him remember the point he wanted to make during the meeting. However, sometimes this was used as a script to make the point that he wanted. When this occurred, Sam thought that it appeared very scripted or rehearsed which could lead to the players losing a bit of faith in what he was saying to them.

*That's where I say he becomes a bit over conscious about what he's about to say, he might have some notes and it's quite obvious that he is reading the notes. He might have something on his phone that he checks. I've seen him do it really well to be fair to him. He has had it on his phone or his iPad before and it's looked quite natural. So he'll have rehearsed his opening and he might give the opening and sometimes I might think that was a bit stilted, it was a bit too rehearsed, but other times it comes across quite well. And then he might just look down at his iPad and say 'right, the next point I want to make is...' and then he'll make his next point. And then he'll look down at his*

*iPad 'and the next point I want to make...' and he won't be reading it, he'll just make his next point and that does look quite structured. It looks like he's really thought about it and he's providing a structure to the meeting, where he's going through the points that he wants to make or it might not be the next point I want to make, it might be the next thing I want to cover is this and I want to ask you a question but there's a nice structure when he gets that right. Where he gets it wrong, or where I think the players lose a bit of faith, is where he's sort of looking at it, reading the words that he's got on his iPad as if it's sort of a prompter and it does look very scripted when he does that and I think you don't see that at camps as much, but you definitely see it in competition particularly if we've lost a close one.*

On another occasion, the Assistant Coach (Barry) commented on how a preparation meeting unfolded, with Greg feeling uncertain about what to say in the meeting and looking to Barry and Sam to support him. However, Barry felt like Greg was looking for words to be put into his mouth that he could then say once they were in the team meeting.

#### Barry

*The reason Sam was involved in that meeting is because Greg wanted him involved in the planning of the meeting, cause he didn't feel sure about what he was doing, so we started discussing it. I asked questions 'what do you want at the end of this meeting that you don't have before?' you know and I'd try and draw out and eventually you just answer your own question. I think it was just getting a really professional proud performance out there against Brazil so quite a clear thing. And Greg just kept on going round saying 'I'm not sure, I'm not sure, so what do I say? So what do I do?' almost as if he wanted words put in his mouth and so my preparation for this meeting is going through this really exhausting and frustrating planning meeting, so to me that's not a good meeting. It was like 10 minutes before we were meant to meet collectively and Greg says 'look, I'm just still not sure' and I said 'look, I'm going to get all the stuff ready for the meeting', cause I just didn't want*

*to be late for the meeting; that's one thing you don't want to be is fucking late and just left Greg with Sam just to try and sort of give Greg some confidence in how to handle the meeting.*

#### **4.10 'Debriefing Rio':**

##### **Lessons learned from Rio and 'what it takes to win'**

This section is comprised of my reflexive account of what occurred within the post-Rio debrief and supporting evidence from various documents and electronic correspondences. The post-Rio debrief was made up of various aspects, including a staff review and athlete review. The staff review comprised of an individual evaluation questionnaire, a 1-to-1 Skype call with the Performance Director (Matt) and then a staff review day where all the staff came together to discuss the previous 4-year cycle and to discuss plans for the upcoming 4-year cycle. The athletes also filled in a questionnaire and their answers were then discussed as a whole athlete and staff group at a debrief camp. This camp consisted of both group discussions about aspects that were working well and could be improved upon and then progressed into individual player reviews to discuss specific aspects of their game that need to be improved moving forwards.

After Rio an email was sent round to the staff asking them to consider what aspects of the game they needed to improve upon in order to compete with the best nations in the world. This was required because the expectations of 'What It Takes To Win' (WITTW), within the sport were almost achieved within the competition but the results did not meet the pre-competition expectations. These expectations now needed reviewing because other nations had performed at a higher level and so the pre-tournament expectations needed adapting to move forwards into the next 4-year Paralympic cycle. Due to my role as Performance Analyst, I therefore had to review a lot of the statistics from the competition.

In the build-up to Rio the statistics were based upon what happened at an international competition in 2015 and most of this earlier work had been carried out by the previous analyst. The Head Coach (Greg) and Assistant Coach (Barry) still felt that the same

statistics were relevant, but they just needed to be updated after what they had witnessed out in Rio. Therefore, I compared the statistics from Rio to the 2015 statistics and updated them so that they reflected what was currently occurring within the sport. Greg and Barry also wanted to share these updated statistics with the players in the debrief and so asked me to produce graphs that would show the changes from 2015 to 2016 and the targets that the squad would be working towards in 2017 and onwards to the 2020 Paralympics in Tokyo. Furthermore, these statistics were used by Matt in the 'WITTW' document, which is submitted to UK Sport as part of the application for funding for the next Olympic/Paralympic cycle.

Once I had finished sorting out and updating the statistics, I also had to complete my staff questionnaire, which was an opportunity for me to share my views about what had occurred over the previous cycle and what could be improved upon during the next cycle. Some examples of the types of questions that were asked in questionnaire can be seen in the images below. After the questionnaire had been filled in, an individual Skype conversation was held with Matt to discuss the answers that had been given within the questionnaire.

**1. In delivering your role over the past 12 months, what do you feel you have done well?** *(Give examples and reasons)*

--

**2. In delivering your role over the past 12 months, what do you feel you have done less well?** *(Give examples and reasons)*

--

**3. In delivery of your role within the Game environment, what do you think you have done well?** *(Give examples and reasons)*

--

**4. In delivery of your role within the Game environment, what has not gone so well?** *(Give examples and reasons)*

--

**5. How well do you think you have contributed and delivered against the programme values/behaviors?** *(Give examples and reasons)*

	Gold Standard, anticipated and did everything possible	Went the extra mile, but could have still done more	Average, just enough	Didn't always deliver, could have done better	Pretty Rubbish
Professionalism					
Honesty					
Trust					
Enjoyment					
Togetherness / Teamwork					
Positive / Energizers					
Effective Communication					
Respect					
Accountability					
Commitment					

From my perspective, I felt like the Skype conversation was fairly laid back and relaxed but was unsure if it was the same for all other members of staff. I had felt nervous waiting for the call to begin, but as soon as it started I was relaxed and comfortable talking

about the answers that I had given within the questionnaire. Furthermore, I felt like Matt appreciated the work I had done and liked me being a part of the staff team, which was a positive for me and probably helped me to feel relaxed during our conversation. We talked through my answers and what I felt I had done well, before discussing areas where I thought I could have been better. After the Skype call had finished, the review process was not yet complete. The staff were due to meet up for a day to discuss comments that staff had given in their questionnaires and then also discuss the answers that players had given.

The staff meeting began with Matt explaining how the day was going to run and what they hoped everyone would get out of the session. Firstly, it was outlined which staff would be moving on from their current positions and therefore would not be involved with the sport during the next 4-year cycle. To me it seemed like quite a few members of the team were moving on and some of the staff voluntarily leaving included: Barry, the Physiotherapist, the Sport Scientist and the Strength & Conditioning Coach. Matt thanked them all for their time and effort whilst they were with the sport and wished them all the best for the future jobs.

The meeting then moved on to discuss the different topics brought up by the staff members within their questionnaires. I had not felt that there were any major issues within the staff team during the build up to Rio, or whilst we were out there. And any small issue that arose seemed to be dealt with in an appropriate manner so that everyone could get on with doing their job to the best of their abilities. Therefore, for much of the morning I did not have much to contribute to the discussion. However, when the conversation moved onto whether the staff had felt that it had been beneficial to hold a staff meeting before Rio to discuss various situations that might arise during the competition, I commented that I had found it beneficial and something that should be repeated for future competitions. It was particularly good to have the captain and vice-captain present so that the players could have

a voice in whatever plans were being made too. This opinion was echoed by most of the staff and so it was agreed to hold similar meetings before travelling to major competitions in future.

After a break for some lunch, Matt shared with the staff the answers which the players had given in response to the questionnaire that had been sent out to them. He went through the comments that players had made about the different members of staff and asked if we had anything that we would like to say in response and if we thought their comments were a fair reflection. I felt like most of the comments about my work were positive, which was enjoyable to read, and the one negative was more around Rich leaving at that stage during the cycle. Matt was quick to point out that this was not an individual saying that I was doing a bad job, but a lesson for him to learn in future about the turnover of staff during a Paralympic cycle and trying to make any future potential changes as easy as possible for the players. Once again it was nice to feel like Matt was supporting me and it made me feel like a valuable member of the staff team. A selection of the comments that were made by the players can be seen in the following screenshot.



#### h. Performance Analysis

- A good replacement for Rich and has made lots of ground.
- Done a really good job, having come in as late as he did.
- Great start to delivering VA and always keen to help or listen to improvements/ ideas. More time with the team will see this move to Gold as he becomes more aware of our needs and the game as a whole.
- He did a great job at getting the V.A to a better standard when the view wasn't great also happy to help and clip things if you want to watch them back. He is also learning fast on the job and getting a better understanding of the game.
- Ian has done what's been asked of him, but feel like we lost a valuable resource in Rich not only tactically but from a classification standpoint.

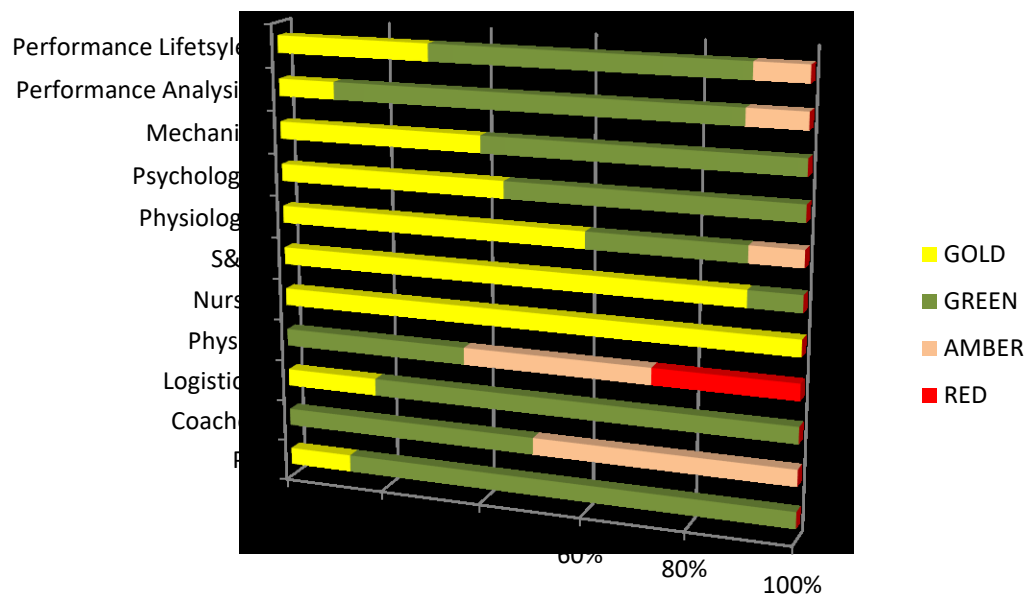
I left the meeting feeling like I had been valued by the players, and other members of the staff team, for the help I had given during my time as the Performance Analyst with the sport. It was a very different feeling to when I had first started with the sport 10 months ago and was unsure and unaware of how I was going to be accepted by the players and staff, or if I was going to be accepted at all. As I headed for my car to drive back home, I felt immensely proud of what I had done since I started in my position and how much I had learnt whilst performing in that role. I was also pleased to be asked to continue in my role as the Performance Analyst as the sport moved forwards into the next 4-year cycle.

Following on from the staff meeting, a training camp was held with all the players and staff which was a chance to debrief from Rio as an entire squad. Greg and Barry presented back some of the statistics to the players that I had provided for them, and they explained how the targets and expectations for winning before the Paralympics had been incorrect and now needed to be adjusted. They did not show any video clips to the players and explained to the players that because the squad would be changing going into the next

cycle, the videos would be shared in future at appropriate training camps, which would be when they were working on specific aspects of the game that related to the footage from Rio.

The next stage of the debrief was then taken by Matt who wanted to go through the answers that the players had given to the questionnaire and give the players an opportunity to look at what had been said by their teammates and have any discussions that were required around the points made. Matt had anonymised all the answers so that players were unable to tell who had made what point. However, most of the time a player would say 'that was my point' and then explain further what they had written to ensure the point was understood correctly and not misinterpreted.

The conversation systematically discussed each member of the staff team. With players given the opportunity to highlight particular strengths or aspects that they liked and wanted to continue into the next cycle, as well as any weaknesses that needed to be improved. As part of the questionnaire the players were asked to score the members of staff for how they rated them, with 'gold' standard being the best possible and 'red' standard a cause for concern. The following chart was then made and shared with both the staff and athletes as part of the debrief process.



This chart, together with comments that had been shared with me at the staff review day, highlighted that the majority of the players felt like I was doing a good job, but there was still room for improvement to reach the 'gold' standard. However, there were other areas that caused more concern for both the athletes and Matt and that was the rating that had been given to the Physio and Coaches. As the Physiotherapist had already decided that they would be leaving their position, it was hoped that with a new appointment, clear guidelines could be set out for both the players and physiotherapist to understand what each other expected both during training camps and whilst away at competitions. However, as Greg was staying in that role moving into the next cycle, some of the issues around why some of the ratings were amber were discussed in more detail. At the end of the day, a summary of the discussion was shared with both players and staff members to highlight some of the key points which the players wanted to be addressed during the upcoming cycle. These points can be seen in the screenshot below.

# Learnings from Rio and from the previous cycle - Key points

## Coaching

Players want coaches to:

- Experiment with lines early in the year, settle on whatever lines and personnel have the chemistry later in the year.
- Be more decisive with lines leading up to tournaments.
- Be more assured in sticking to game plans in tournaments.
- Be better at stopping bad habit and bad practices in training
- Be stricter with players.
  
- Players stated that they have to take more responsibility for improving.
- Coaches to better manage their emotions in games.
- Coaches expect players to demonstrate their improvements with video clips.

## Meetings

- Fewer meetings.
- Each meeting to have clear objectives set out at the start, a clear structure for the content of the meeting and a clear summary at the end of the take-home points.

The rest of the camp was spent carrying out individual reviews with the players to give them an opportunity to discuss specific aspects of their game where improvements could be made that would help them to become better players. For example, this could have been discussions with Greg and Barry around on-court aspects of their game that needed improving, or discussions about working with the performance lifestyle advisor and sport scientist to improve their diet and well-being outside of training camps and competitions.

During the individual player review meetings, a few players announced that they would be retiring from the sport and so would not be present at the selection camp in the New Year. Greg and Barry expressed their thanks for everything that they had given during their time with the sport and wished them all the best for the future. This decision was then shared with the rest of the players during a team meeting at the end of the camp, where each of the retiring players said a few words and wished the rest of the squad good luck for future competitions.

I came away from the review process feeling that whilst there were improvements that could be made in most aspects of the programme, overall it was heading in the right direction and everyone was striving to improve. The players and staff seemed to be aligned in where they wanted to go and how they wanted the programme to run; I felt that if this could be achieved then the success that everyone was craving would surely happen.

#### **4.11 'Don't tell anyone it's a secret':**

##### **A player leaves early for his brother's wedding before final**

The following narrative is an example of a situation that occurred during the tournament, which was openly discussed at team meetings. A foreseen, unusual incident required planning to cover the lack of availability of a key member of the team in the final stages of the competition. The data for this section is comprised of a player's online post competition blog and my personal recollection of what occurred in the build up to a major championship, and whilst we were at the championship. The narrative is about a decision that the individual made, and the consequent actions taken by the team about how to keep the information hidden from the opposition teams for tactical reasons.

The following extract is taken from a player's online blog, where he recalled a decision that he had to make regarding whether he stayed for the entire championships and missed his brother's wedding or left the competition after the semi-final match to ensure he was at his brother's wedding.

*Back from the European Championships and I have another gold medal.*

*This was my third European Championship and the second time I have been part of the winning team. However, this time was a lot different and mainly because I had decided to miss the final.*

*This had seemed like a huge decision for me, do I stay and be part of a team aiming to retain our number one ranking in Europe or do I fly home and attend my brother's wedding? When it actually came down to it, however, it wasn't a big decision at all and I knew I absolutely had to attend my brother's wedding.*

*My brother has always been there for me through the toughest time in my life so I was pretty sure I could, and should, make the sacrifice to attend the most important day in his. I make a lot of sacrifices to train and compete but this was one of those occasions that was too important to miss.*

*The coaches and the rest of the team had known I would be missing the final, if we got there, since Christmas when I made my decision. They have all been brilliant and been completely understanding of my circumstances and not judged my decision once. Instead, we have been working harder than ever and spent a lot of time developing different lines that we knew we would need to use. We also had to try and keep it a secret, I am not sure if we succeeded but the idea was to make sure other teams did not know what line-ups they would have to face.*

*In the end it did not seem to really matter that I was not there. There is a real depth within the squad and the players we can bring off the bench. I was absolutely gutted I was not going to be with the team for the final but I had absolute faith they would win. That is not to take anything away from the opposition who are a class team but I trusted that they would get the job done. In fact, after watching the game it was probably the best team performance of the tournament.*

*Every athlete wants to feel that they are the reason their team is winning or succeeding but the really special moments come from a shared commitment, to play your role whilst achieving together. That is what I love about this sport, we are working for something bigger than ourselves. In the end it really does not matter about individual accolades or individual statistics but the relationships and achievements that you create with the group. This is what keeps driving me to play and compete in my sport.*

*This season has made me realise that more than ever. I knew I would not be there to help my teammates in the final so I have been working in every other way I could think of. Whether that is through encouragement or criticism, or simply trying my hardest to give them the toughest opposition during training. It has all been about working to regain the title.*

*I am especially proud of our achievement because there has been real pressure. We knew we had to secure the number one spot in Europe for the future of our sport. With the funding situation still unsure moving forward, we knew that we it would put us in a much more attractive position for any potential sponsors if we could win.*

*The hard work will now start all over again, as European champions we have secured ourselves a spot in the World Championships next year.*

As highlighted within this blog post, the Head Coach (Greg) and the squad were aware of the player's decision around six months before the competition. Therefore, during one of the training camps of early 2017 there was a team meeting in which Greg informed all the athletes and staff that one of our key players would not be present for the final match in the European Championships. He went on to explain that it was his brother's wedding on the same weekend and he was going to return home to be present for that. However, he would be part of the squad and available for all the matches before the final to help the team achieve the goal of defending their European title.

All the athletes and staff were happy with the decision that the player and Greg had agreed upon. Greg went on to explain that therefore the focus of most of the training camps in the build up to the competition would be about developing alternative options that were not as focused or reliant upon Ben. The players agreed that this would be the best option moving forwards and were positive about being able to train the alternative options against Ben. They thought that this would provide them with a strong challenge that would replicate the opposition that could be faced during the competition.

Furthermore, Greg informed the players that they were not to mention anything about Ben not being around for the final to anyone, including their families. He didn't want



anything about it on social media. Additionally, he did not even want it to be discussed with club teammates that were not part of the squad. He wanted this information to remain a secret within the squad so that no other European team would be aware of the situation before the match. He emphasised that this would give the team a tactical advantage as most of the opposition would be designing strategies that were focused on nullifying Ben's abilities. And as he would not be playing it would take the opposition by surprise, which the team could use to their advantage.

#### Personal recollection of events during the European Championships

Whilst at the European Championships and once it had been confirmed that the team were into the semi-finals, the issue of Ben leaving before the final game was brought up during a morning staff meeting. This was an opportunity to make sure that all the staff agreed upon one reason as to why he would not be seen with the squad in the evening after the semi-final and in the morning before the final. Then this message would be passed onto the players to ensure that everybody would give the same reason for his absence if asked by someone from a different country.

A few ideas were suggested by different members of staff. The first idea was that he had gone out for the evening for a meal with his girlfriend (who had been seen at the matches throughout the tournament). Secondly, it was suggested that we could say he was unwell and was in his room so as not to make anyone else ill too. Finally, it was thought that we could just say that he was around the hotel somewhere without being too specific about

where. It was decided that the idea of him spending time with his girlfriend would be the one shared if anyone asked where he was.

Furthermore, it was agreed that the squad would be told not gather in large groups which could draw attention to the fact that a player was not present. This would be a change from the past days where the team had waited until everyone was present before meals or travelling on the bus between the hotel and venue. The staff wanted everyone to act as if nothing had changed, despite the fact everyone knew Ben would be going to the airport after the semi-final match later that day. These messages were passed onto the players by Greg during a team meeting later that morning. They were also asked if they had any better ideas, but everyone was happy to say that he was out for the evening with his girlfriend.

Additionally, within the staff meeting, the general plans around Ben's departure were discussed. After the semi-final match a car was going to be arranged to take him and his girlfriend to the airport, this would be done without the organisers' knowledge; they all thought he would be departing the day after the final with the rest of the squad. The hotel staff were not informed that he would be leaving, but this was not particularly important as the players were sharing rooms and so the room was still required for the remaining player.

Furthermore, all his equipment was going to be left within the team area at the venue, so it looked like he would be playing in the final game. His game shirt would be placed out as normal before the match, so if anyone went by the area for all intents and purposes it would appear like he would be playing. The Team Manager would inform the organisers at the latest possible moment that he would not be lining up for the final and to remove him from the team roster. This had to be done to ensure that he could not be called for a post-match drug testing procedure. It was hoped that the first time the opposition would realise

his absence was when the teams came onto the court for their warm-ups before the game, which was only 25 minutes before the start of the match.

On the day of the final, it became clear that the plan that had put in place had been relatively successful. I was setting up my camera equipment in the same position I had been all competition, when a player from another nation (who was not playing in the competition) came and sat next to my position. He had been at the competition on the previous day and watched our semi-final from the same position, so I had already had a conversation with him. He felt that our team would be far too strong for the opposition in the final and it would be easy for us. There were also a couple of other people sat in a position just to the side of where I was, they were all having a conversation about what they thought would happen in the final. Most of the conversation was about how the opposition would try and contain and stop one of our key players, Ben. This meant that they did not know he would not be playing in the final.

When the teams were introduced and came onto the court it didn't take long for the people next to me to notice that Ben was not present in our team. Immediately they looked to me and asked where he was and why he wasn't playing. To begin with I tried to act like I didn't know what was happening and acted surprised that he wasn't out there by saying, 'are you sure he isn't out there?'. However, they did not believe that I was just as surprised as them and was not aware of what was going and his absence. They continue to ask questions and probe for information from me, and the Psychologist (Sam) who had now arrived and was starting to set up next to me.

Meanwhile down on the court, the players were going through their pre-match warm up. The opposition were doing the same, with their Assistant Coach putting their players through their paces. Their Head Coach was walking round observing their players,

but also looking over to our players to see what they were doing. This is when he realised that Ben might not be on the court, he moved round to check that he had not made a mistake. When he realised that he was not present he went straight over to their Assistant Coach and had a discussion with him. Sam and I both witnessed this and looked at each other and smiled, it looked like our plan to keep his absence a secret from the opposition had been successful; they both seemed shocked that he was not there.

Up in the stands the people next to us were still probing for more information, they did not believe that we were unaware of the situation. The player came over to our table and tried to ask us what was going on, to which Sam responded by saying he wasn't playing due to personal reasons. He had hoped by sharing this information it would stop the questioning. Although this did not happen, the player seemed like he might have been aware that he might not have been playing in the final beforehand. He asked was it something to do with his brother and if he had gone home, we said we were unsure and whatever the situation was, it was something that had been sorted between Ben, Greg and the Team Manager. This seemed to satisfy him enough and he went back over to where he had been sat and shared the little information that he had got out of us with the others near him. They then turned to us and said that from a neutral point of view it would now make the final a lot more exciting, as it should be a much closer game.

As Ben's blog commented, the final was still won despite his absence. After a close first half, they managed to pull away in the second half to win the match and successfully defend their European title. All the months of preparation had paid off and both the players and staff were ready to celebrate! As far as I am aware, it appeared that nobody outside the squad and staff had known that Ben would be missing until just before the final match.

## **Chapter 5 – Discussion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The narratives presented within the Findings (Chapter 4) can be understood by examining the stories utilising the work of Goffman as a theoretical lens. Given the interpretive interactionist nature of Goffman's theorising, and the interpretive research approach undertaken within the present thesis, Goffman's work offers a novel theoretical lens, through which to better understand the preparation, strategic management of unfolding interactions, and their influence upon future interactions. Although Goffman's work has been used within sport and sports coaching contexts previously (see Appendix A), a number of important elements of Goffman's theorising have yet to be explored within the context of sports research. It is through this analysis that the thesis aims to contribute towards a novel empirical and theoretical understanding of sports coaching contexts, and the use of video-based analysis within performance analysis feedback settings.

There are various similarities from Goffman's (1959) *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* text and the way in which the participants behaved during video-based feedback sessions. Therefore, this chapter shall be separated into different sections to discuss each aspect of Goffman's work in relation to the findings presented within this thesis. To begin with, I argue that the performances that the coaches were giving to the athletes during the video-based feedback sessions can be likened to that of a theatrical performance, with the coaches attempting to manage the impression that they portray to their audience. Secondly, due to the nature in which the staff, and some selected players, worked together in preparation for the meetings I draw upon the concept of 'performance teams' to make sense of how these individuals worked together to sustain their performances. Thirdly, I discuss how the membership of a performance team influences the amount of access they were

given to the backstage environment; certain individuals were not allowed into the backstage area, whilst others were given that privilege. Next, I argue that certain individuals and various performance teams were keeping a range of secrets from each other to maintain their impression. Additionally, sometimes these individuals and performance teams had to adopt various discrepant roles to once again maintain their image. However, sometimes individuals did not manage to keep their secrets or play their discrepant role effectively which caused a breakdown in the impression that they were giving to the audience. Within each of these different sections, I shall draw on various examples taken from the narrative data analysis to extend both our empirical and theoretical understanding of the use of video-based performance analysis in practice.

## **5.2 'Their performances are the meetings'**

Within the narratives, the Coaches' (Greg and Barry) delivery of the video-based feedback sessions can be related to a theatrical performance. Therefore, the athletes and other members of staff present during the video-based feedback sessions can be viewed as the audience to Greg and Barry's performance. Goffman (1959) explained that as well as there being an audience present during a performance, there can also be observers and co-participants. An example of such a role can be seen in 'preparation for team meetings' (Narrative 1), where I can be described as a co-participant because I was invited to perform with Greg and Barry for a short period of time. After this co-performance with Greg and Barry, I then became an observer of the performance. Therefore, it can be argued that an individual's role can change during the performance and should be viewed as fluid in nature. Additionally, my invitation to join the frontstage presentation demonstrates that Greg, Barry and myself were giving a managed performance to our audience that had been prepared in

a backstage environment to which the audience had been denied access (Goffman, 1959). Furthermore, the invitation to join in the performance was not a surprise to me, and therefore, it could be argued that I was part of a 'performance team', but this shall be explored in more detail in a following section.

Given the theatrical nature of the video-based feedback sessions, there are not just expectations placed on the performers, but there are also certain expectations placed on the individuals within the room when the session occurs. For example, the audience is expected to listen and pay attention to the performance and sometimes contribute when directed to by the performers. This was reinforced during Narrative 3 where during an interview with a player (Adam) he said that players had 'to keep their end of the bargain'. These expectations might not have always been openly talked about during the sessions but were expected behaviours that Greg and Barry had of their audience during the sessions. For example, the audience was expected to pay attention to the points that were being made by Greg and Barry and if either of them felt that a player perhaps had not been paying attention they might ask that individual a direct question to check that they had been paying attention. Another example, was that the athletes were expected to arrive in adequate time for the beginning of the session, both on-court and in a classroom, so that Greg and Barry's performance could begin on time and keep to their planned schedule. Therefore, the players were required to perform during the video-based feedback sessions to manage the impression that they conveyed to Greg and Barry (Goffman, 1959). Whilst certain players were perhaps able to manage their impressions during the session so that their negative feelings were not shown to Greg and Barry, other players were not always as good at managing their own impression (Goffman, 1959).

These performances during video-based feedback meeting can be understood by adopting Goffman's (1959, p. 26) work where he defined a performance as "all the activity

of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants". Within the video-based feedback sessions, Greg and Barry wanted to influence the players' behaviours and actions and alter them for future performances, consequently, their delivery of the session can be viewed as a performance. These performances occur during a frontstage area, which Goffman (1959, p. 110) explained was "the place where the performance is given" and within this region an individual may 'give the appearance that his activity in the region maintains and embodies certain standards".

Furthermore, Goffman (1959, p. 37) stated that "when an actor takes on an established social role, usually he finds that a particular front has already been established for it". Therefore, Greg and Barry had to understand that there were certain expectations on them during these meetings and that these expectations had to be met so that the audience members continued to view them in the same manner following the meeting. Additionally, Goffman (1959, p.54) suggested that "performers often foster the impression that they had ideal motives for acquiring the role in which they are performing, that they have ideal qualifications for the role". Therefore, as well as Greg and Barry having certain expectations on them and their role, they want to convey to the audience that they are suitably qualified to be in their position via their performances (Goffman, 1959).

I will now discuss the performances given by a selection of participants within the narrative analysis. Firstly, the performances of all the participants will be explored, this includes Greg and Barry's performances, the occasions when other members of staff assist their performances, and when the players had to give performances. Finally, the times when I felt like I was giving a performance to the audience will be discussed.



### 5.2.1 Participants' performances

Within Narrative 2, Greg explained how he likes to learn from previous mistakes and how he questions himself as he is not the most confident person during meetings. However, from being present in the meetings I did not notice any nerves when he spoke to the players and he always seemed confident and assured in what he was saying. By appearing confident to the audience, Greg is putting on a performance and managing the impression he is displaying, despite not feeling the same emotions internally (Goffman, 1959). Sam explained how the impressions that Greg and Barry have given to the audience has changed over the years from someone who wanted to appear knowledgeable and so stood at the front lecturing the players to now being more interactive and collaborative with the players. However, this is still evidence that both Greg and Barry undertake backstage work to manage their frontstage performances (Goffman, 1959).

Despite the effort of Greg and Barry to manage their impression, Mark commented in Narrative 3 that the players were not always convinced by the coaches' performances because sometimes the meetings felt "very, very unprepared and they've [the coaches] just fallen flat on their face". Evidence of these poor impression management skills are discussed by drawing upon the relevant narratives from the findings.

At the beginning of Narrative 6, I was confident in what I was doing as the session was going to the arranged plan, but this soon changed after the disagreement between Greg and Barry. This disagreement highlights an example of a lack of understanding of the importance of impression management by Greg and Barry (Goffman, 1959). Because of their actions, I felt awkward sat next to Greg and Barry and wondered how the rest of the session was going to go and if the players would still contribute and take on-board what they were being told.

Barry and the Psychologist (Sam) both recognised that the frontstage performance was not as good as it could have been (Goffman, 1959). Barry felt that the sessions were not always properly prepared for and Sam noticed how the coaches were sometimes underprepared for the team meetings. Sam suggested that this lack of backstage preparation could be a reason why Greg and Barry did not always appear to be 'on the same page' during the meeting (Goffman, 1959). Furthermore, by Greg and Barry behaving in this fashion during the meetings Sam commented how it sends a mixed message to the players causing their authority to be undermined. Consequently, this poor frontstage performance by Greg and Barry means that the fostered impression cannot be maintained before the audience and so this results in embarrassment for them (Goffman, 1959).

In Narrative 8, Sam explained how in some team meetings Greg would use either his iPad or phone to have some notes about what he wanted to discuss within the meeting, but occasionally it would feel too rehearsed and scripted which could lead to the players losing faith in his ability and Greg not managing his impression with the players successfully (Goffman, 1959). Sam felt the reason Greg needed assistance with the words he was saying, or any other props he may use, was because of Greg's self-doubt in his own ability. Greg attempts to hide this self-doubt from the audience by managing the impression he creates during the meetings, although Sam believes sometimes he manages this task successfully but on other occasions he can fail (Goffman, 1959). Due to the partial success of Greg's acting ability, Greg's performances and impression management skills still needs further improvements to maintain his confident appearance and front while facing his audience (Goffman, 1959).

As well as Greg and Barry sometimes failing to adopt appropriate impression management skills, the Performance Director (Matt) also struggled to manage their impression of self towards others within Narrative 7. This was an occasion when Matt had a

rant to the players, without Greg inviting him to speak to the players about the game plans and the expectations placed on the players. Whilst this perhaps shows a lack of backstage preparation as it was not a planned section of the meeting, it also highlights the Matt's lack of impression management skills (Goffman, 1959). He was unable to sit as an audience member and listen to the discussion and provide Greg and Barry with an opinion after the meeting in a backstage setting, but instead thought it was necessary to disrupt the meeting to share his views (Goffman, 1959). Whilst this outburst might highlight that Matt adopted a discrepant role within the performance (Goffman, 1959), this shall be covered later in the corresponding section. This outburst also has similarities to when Greg and Barry had a disagreement in Narrative 6, consequently the audiences' view of the performers' impression will alter leading to embarrassment for the actors (Goffman, 1959).

As well as having to give face-to-face performances, Narrative 4 highlighted how Greg and Barry had to manage their impression via the WhatsApp communications; these communications with the players can be viewed as another frontstage environment (Goffman, 1959). When Greg and Barry were presenting information to the players they had both agreed on what information they wanted to share, whereas this agreement would not occur if they began responding to comments in the WhatsApp group without having a backstage discussion with each other first (Goffman, 1959).

Since the Rio Paralympics, the style of interactions within the WhatsApp group has evolved from Greg and Barry setting a task and the players responding with video clips and comments, to Greg providing a specific clip to the players and asking the players for their thoughts about it. This evolution demonstrates how Greg continually works on his frontstage performance and manages the interaction and impression with his audience (Goffman, 1959). Sam highlighted that this change in frontstage performance may have come about from some of the conversations that he had with Greg about providing shorter and more

meaningful clips during team meetings. Furthermore, Sam explained how this new format might require less backstage preparation for Greg, as he would no longer have to go through all the video clips that were being generated from the players' homework task (Goffman, 1959). Now Greg could focus his backstage work on finding the specific video clips that he wanted to generate a discussion with the players about or test their knowledge about certain aspects of the game (Goffman, 1959).

The WhatsApp communications also presented a frontstage environment that the players had to be aware of because despite Greg and Barry not interacting much with the players, they were monitoring the communications and so the players had to be mindful of the impressions they created with Greg and Barry through their comments (Goffman, 1959). The players had to ensure that the same video clips were not repeated by different people, a player (Josh) explained that when people put up clips that had already been suggested by another player, it demonstrated that the individual had not been watching what other people have been posting within the group. This behaviour highlights to Greg and Barry which players are aware of what other people are posting and who is not paying that much attention. Therefore, players need to manage their interactions within that group to avoid repetition to ensure they do not get embarrassed and lose face in front of Greg, Barry and other team members (Goffman, 1959).

### 5.2.2 My performances

Within the reflexive account of Narrative 5, I became aware of my own performance to Greg and Barry and wanted to manage the impression I created with them (Goffman, 1959). Previously when I had a conversation with them I felt like it was a relaxed backstage environment where I could speak freely and not worry too much about what I said (Goffman,

1959). However, on this occasion I felt like there was more pressure on me to appear knowledgeable to provide them with a satisfactory answer. Therefore, I felt like I had to present myself to Greg and Barry in a professional manner and pretend that I had plenty of knowledge despite internally feeling like I did not know very much (Goffman, 1959). Regarding the comments I made, I felt that Greg and Barry bought into them and the impression that I gave off as they accepted my advice and were keen to try and implement it within their training session (Goffman, 1959).

Whilst the frontstage performance to Greg and Barry might have been satisfactory, I felt that the performance that Greg and I gave during the training session could have been better. The reason for thinking this was because the communication between us was not very good and so the appropriate clip was not always played, or it was played at an incorrect speed. Therefore, I felt that the impression we gave off to the players was that we were underprepared and not as professional as we should have been (Goffman, 1959). Even when I altered my position on the balcony, I still could not hear what was being said clearly on the court below and as such I felt that the performance and impression were still below the expected standard (Goffman, 1959). As Greg was very quick to review the footage with the players, it was not possible for us to have a discussion in a backstage setting about what aspects of the clips he wanted to talk about beforehand without the players being present (Goffman, 1959).

Within Narrative 9 I had to present various performances at different times during the narrative. Firstly, I felt like I was giving a performance when I had to present the statistics to the staff members and later on the players. Next, I gave a performance when answering questions in the individual and team staff review processes. Finally, I was ready to take part in the player review should any questions arise from the statistics I produced for Greg and Barry to present to the players. Each of these scenarios shall now be dealt with in turn.

Firstly, as the statistics were for the 'WITTW' document I wanted to ensure that they were accurate and so spent a lot of time in a backstage environment going through all the statistics and then checking and double-checking before sharing them with the other staff members (Goffman, 1959). Despite not giving a physical performance in front of an audience, it still felt like I was giving a performance and anyone who was reading the statistics was the audience (Goffman, 1959). Once I had compiled the data for the document, Greg and Barry were keen to share the information with the players. Therefore, the audience I was presenting the information to was increasing and so I had to ensure that the statistics were suitable for multiple purposes. Consequently, I was required to undertake more backstage preparation as Greg and Barry wanted some of the statistics edited before sharing them with the players (Goffman, 1959).

Within the staff questionnaire, I had to think carefully about what information I wanted to share with the Performance Director (Matt) because I did not want to change the impression that I had created over my time working with the sport (Goffman, 1959). Therefore, the answers that I gave had to be in-keeping with the role that was expected of me by the audience (Goffman, 1959). Additionally, the interview with Matt was a chance to discuss the responses to the questionnaire. This was another opportunity to ensure that the impression given within the written answers was the one that was appropriate to my expected performance (Goffman, 1959). Despite having some nerves about whether I could give a performance that was expected of me, these nerves soon went away, and I was able to focus on answering the questions in the manner that was expected of me (Goffman, 1959).

The staff review day was an opportunity to discuss the previous cycle and prepare for the upcoming player debrief camp. Despite not contributing much to the conversation during the morning I still had to act appropriately, which involved listening intently to what was being said, nodding my head in agreement with comments other members of staff were

making and taking notes on what was being discussed (Goffman, 1959). It could be considered that I was behaving in a standard that was expected of me in both my 'politeness' and 'decorum', which are two areas that were discussed within Goffman's (1959) work. The definition given to politeness was "the way in which the performer treats the audience while engaged in talk with them or in gestural interchanges that are a substitute for talk" while decorum refers to "the way in which the performer comports himself while in visual or aural range of the audience but not necessarily engaged in talk with them" (Goffman, 1959, p. 110). Whilst I did not contribute much to the conversation, I still had to give the performance of an active listener who was engaged in the conversation by adopting appropriate body language, gestures and responses to comments made by other individuals (Goffman, 1959).

Within the player review training camp, Greg and Barry used the statistics that I had prepared to show the players what the new goals would be in the next cycle, which were based upon what had occurred during the Rio competition. Whilst I was not directly involved in the delivery of the presentation, I had been part of the backstage preparation with Greg and Barry and I still had to listen carefully to what was being discussed (Goffman, 1959). This was because I knew that if the players had any questions the coaches might look for me to step in and answer the question for them and I did not want to embarrass myself and lose face in front of the team and other staff members by not knowing what the questions were (Goffman, 1959).

### **5.3 'We're our own little team'**

I observed that within various narratives there were different 'performance teams' for each performance. The most apparent performance team is that of Greg and Barry, who frequently had to work together as part of a team when delivering both on-court and classroom sessions to the players. In Narrative 2, Barry commented how he and Greg looked

“to have a united front” whenever they were in the presence of the players because they were their “own little team” which required them “to have each other’s backs”. Within a frontstage region Greg and Barry put on a united front, but when they are in a backstage region they can relax and do not necessarily have to agree with each other. Therefore, how they present themselves to their audience is an example of impression management because Greg and Barry have a clear impression that they wish to portray to the players about how they work together as a team.

Additionally, in Narrative 1, I was part of a performance team with Greg and Barry. The three of us worked together to deliver the session to the audience, who were not aware of the planning and preparation that we had undertaken. We were a small team, with the same goals, that were helping each other to achieve the aims of the session. Within our team, Greg can be viewed as the director because he introduced the subject and controlled how much input the audience were allowed.

Whilst I had provided assistance in preparation and delivery of a session in Narrative 1, Greg and Barry also had help from other staff members such as the Psychologist (Sam) and the Performance Director (Matt). Sam was not involved with every session, but sometimes Greg and Barry were keen to get his opinion about how a session should be structured and what type of language they should be using with the players. Often, Sam would not be involved in the delivery of a frontstage performance, but the work he did with Greg and Barry in preparation for their performance would make him part of a performance team; he was aware of what the performance was going to be and had helped Greg and Barry to construct it.

On the other hand, Matt would often reflect on the performance given by Greg and Barry after the event and suggest improvements for the delivery of future sessions. However,



within Narrative 7, he became part of a performance team during the delivery of a session, even though he had not been involved with the planning of the session. Matt's opinion was welcomed by Greg because it allowed him to build upon the point that Matt had made, and the audience were not aware of the unplanned nature of Matt's involvement.

Within Narrative 10, it can be argued that the entire squad of players and staff made up a performance team. The aim of this performance team was to ensure that other countries did not become aware of the secret that the team were trying to keep and so every member had to perform in an appropriate manner.

During 'The disagreement' narrative (Narrative 6), Greg sanctioned Barry immediately, which contradicts the behaviour that Goffman (1959) suggested. However, the consequences of this corrective sanctioning appeared to be similar to the suggestion that Goffman (1959) made, which resulted in embarrassment for Greg and Barry and further disruption of their performance. Alternatively, within 'The script writer' narrative (Narrative 8), Sam did not disrupt the performance being given by Greg and waited until afterwards to discuss what had occurred and, therefore, Sam did not cause embarrassment for Greg in front of the audience.

This idea of a performance team was discussed by Goffman (1959, p. 85) when he referred to "any set of individuals who cooperate in staging a single routine". The reason behind this belief was because Goffman (1959, p. 83) found "that the definition of the situation projected by a particular participant is an integral part of a projection that is fostered and sustained by the intimate cooperation of more than one participant". Goffman (1959, p. 108) contended that "a team, then, may be defined as a set of individuals whose intimate cooperation is required if a given projected definition of the situation is to be maintained". As well as video-based feedback sessions having similarities to a theatrical

performance, the behaviour of Greg and Barry during the session can be viewed as a performance team. At different stages during the narratives other individuals may also be invited to join the performance team. Therefore, a performance team should not be viewed as a fixed group of people that will be the same during every interaction, rather there will be various performance teams dependent on each interaction that occurs. For example, there were occasions where I was part of a performance team with Greg and Barry, but on other occasions I was not a member of the team and other individuals might have been such as Sam, Matt, or even one of the athletes.

In a performance team Goffman (1959, p. 101) explained how “one often finds that someone is given the right to direct and control the progress of the dramatic action. ... Sometimes the individual who dominated the show in this way and is, in a sense, the director of it, plays an actual part in the performance he directs”. Given the nature of the video-based feedback sessions it can be reasoned that it depended upon which of the coaches was leading the session to who would be viewed as the director for that performance. However, Goffman (1959, p. 103) noticed that if a performance had a director then the audience “are likely to hold him more responsible than other performers for the success of the performance”. Therefore, the athletes would hold whichever coach that delivered the session responsible for its success or failure. Although, it was commented by some players (Adam, Mark, Pete and Simon) that both Greg and Barry should take equal responsibility for the sessions and they should check the content of their session with the other coach before delivering it to the athletes to ensure that they are both agreed on how the performance will be delivered and the message it will give to the athletes (see Narrative 6). Consequently, it could be argued that Greg and Barry are viewed as co-directors by the athletes and have to take equal responsibility for the success or failure of their performance.

Goffman (1959, p. 88) also noticed that “while a team-performance is in progress, any member of the team has the power to give the show away or to disrupt it by inappropriate conduct. Each team-mate is forced to rely on the good conduct and behaviour of his fellows, and they, in turn, are forced to rely on him. There is then, perforce, a bond of reciprocal dependence linking team-mates to one another”. Therefore, Greg and Barry are reliant on each other to behave in an appropriate manner during the performance because of their bond in a performance team. Furthermore, the consequences of not behaving in an expected manner was explained by Goffman (1959, p.91) where he stated that “it seems to be generally felt that public disagreement among the members of the team not only incapacitates them for united action but also embarrasses the reality sponsored by the team”. Because of the consequences of a public disagreement, Goffman (1959, p. 94) suggested that “when a member of the team makes a mistake in the presence of the audience, the other team-members often must suppress their immediate desire to punish and instruct the offender until, that is, the audience is no longer present. After all, immediate corrective sanctioning would often only disturb the interaction further and, as previously suggested, make the audience privy to a view that ought to be reserved for team-mates”.

## **5.4 Behind the scenes**

Narrative 1 demonstrated some of the preparation work that occurs between staff members before a team meeting. Greg, Barry and I were preparing and talking about the upcoming team meeting without having the audience (the players) present during the conversation. This allowed us to talk openly about how the session would be structured and who would deliver each section of the meeting. This resonates with the earlier quote from Goffman’s (1959) work where he wrote that a backstage environment was an opportunity to

run through the performance. Furthermore, when Greg asked me to explain the statistics due to his lack of confidence with numbers, it was an opportunity for a 'weaker' member of the team to be dropped from that particular part of the performance (Goffman, 1959). Despite having the statistics explained, with embellished notes below the PowerPoint slide, Greg still felt unsuited to deliver the information and so I agreed to come into the team meeting to assist him with that section.

Additionally, the interview data within the narrative demonstrated that Greg and Barry were aware of the importance of preparing for the team meetings. Therefore, they are required to invest significant time into their backstage work before presenting the information back to an audience (the players). This came to light during the individual interviews when Barry suggested that they were now being "more conscious of making sure we've got our message that we want to get across whatever happens". Greg commented that they also plan the order of the clips to make sure that the sessions are fluent, whilst Barry said that they also have to agree on who is going to talk about what during the session and how long they will allow for each section of the session before delivering it to the players.

Within Narrative 2, Barry commented on how sometimes he and Greg can create moments during the video-based feedback meeting to have backstage conversations with each other despite still being in the presence of the audience (Goffman, 1959). They achieve this by setting the players small group tasks (3-4 players), and then they can have a hushed conversation with each other about how the session is going and what aspects of it they might need to alter when the meeting continues with the entire group. Additionally, Barry explained how backstage work is important in terms of making them look organised, sensible and professional when presenting to the audience. He suggested that this could be done by turning up to the meeting early to ensure all the equipment works correctly (projectors, computers, iPads etc.) and behaving like a swan during the meeting so that the players see a

calm and relaxed performance despite perhaps feeling differently internally (Goffman, 1959). As both Greg and Barry agree upon this aspect of presenting, they both adopt certain techniques to manage the impression that they portray to the audience and view this as an important factor during team meetings (Goffman, 1959).

Despite managing their impressions while presenting information back to the players, Greg and Barry are not so restrained when they are talking to each other about the players during their preparation for the team meetings. Greg explained that “away from that [a team meeting] we will be a lot more critical of players” and when asked for an example he explained that he might say to Barry “fucking hell, what the hell was Cameron doing there?” but then when having the conversation with Cameron he would say “this might have been the way to do it better”. In his own words he tries “to be a lot more measured when I’m talking to them”, this is a clear example of how he manages his behaviour and puts on a front whilst in the presence of his audience, but when he is in a backstage environment he can relax and speak freely to his assistant (Goffman, 1959).

Furthermore, Greg was aware of how many videos of each player he was showing during a team meeting. He didn’t want to show too many of one individual to make sure that they did not feel like they were being bullied while in front of the rest of their teammates. This highlights the importance of carrying out sufficient backstage activity to prepare for the meeting and also considering how people will react to the front that he presents to them during the meeting (Goffman, 1959).

Interestingly, the interview data from Narrative 6 highlighted how Barry would sometimes feel on unsafe ground when answering a question from a player during a video-based feedback session and always looked to Greg to give the answer. He explained that the reason for feeling like this during the meetings was perhaps due to a lack of preparation for

the video sessions because they had many other sessions to prepare for too, such as the on-court sessions (Goffman, 1959). Consequently, this lack of backstage activity and preparation for their performance can be viewed as a contributing factor to why they ended up having a disagreement in front of their audience (Goffman, 1959). This lack of preparation highlights some of the challenges that coaches face in an elite environment and the pressure that they are under to deliver multiple sessions of an expected standard and quality. If these standards are not met then the audience may become aware of the lack of preparation for a session, leading to embarrassment and loss of face for the performers (Goffman, 1959).

Further backstage activity is demonstrated in the reflexive account of Narrative 7, which explains some of the organisation that was involved in preparing the classroom for the team meeting (Goffman, 1959). For example, this included me being directed by Greg and Barry to set up the classroom in a specific layout for the upcoming session before the players arrived, I would then go about moving the furniture around so that the tables and chairs were placed how they wished them to be (Goffman, 1959). I also made sure that all the electrical equipment, such as the projector and iPad or computer were connected and ready to be used by Greg and Barry once the players arrived (Goffman, 1959). This type of preparation would happen for most of the classroom sessions that the Coaches conducted and so I always ensured I made my way to the room at least 15 minutes before the scheduled session time so I had time to do the relevant preparations.

Narrative 8 highlighted how the Psychologist (Sam) tried to assist Greg and Barry in their preparations for team meetings (Goffman, 1959). Mainly his role was to help them use the right language that would set the correct tone for the meeting, but if Greg asked questions how that could be done Sam would give him some examples. These examples were then used word for word within some of the team meetings, which Sam explained as being counterproductive because the message is not as powerful when the words are not his own

and he felt like the players also knew when Greg was not being genuine (Goffman, 1959). Therefore, Greg should have been more aware of the impression that he was portraying to the players during the team meetings and undertaken more conscious efforts to ensure the impression he gave was that the words he was saying were his own (Goffman, 1959).

Additionally, Barry explained that during some of the preparation meetings while out in Rio the discussions were not always constructive and sometimes left too close to the team meeting, which would leave him feeling under-prepared and stressed out. When this occurred, he left the discussion to Sam and Greg and went to the team meeting room to prepare the room and make sure they were on time for the start of the meeting. By making this decision Barry was trying to ensure that he and Greg would maintain the impression of being prepared and professional in the eyes of the players and any other audience members who were present (Goffman, 1959). However, this highlights similar issues to Narrative 6 around feeling under prepared for team meetings and how this can be stressful for Greg and Barry.

Sometimes it was not just the staff members that had to engage with backstage activity, but the players engaged with this type of activity. For example, during Narrative 3, it was discovered that when the players were in a backstage area (outside the team meeting environment) they often discussed how they generally did not look forward to team meetings. However, these discussions remained in a backstage environment and were not openly shared with any members of staff (Goffman, 1959). Therefore, during video-based feedback sessions players had to manage their impressions to hide any negative feelings from Greg and Barry (Goffman, 1959). Whilst certain players were perhaps able to manage their impressions during the session, other players were not always as good at managing their own impression.

There was an occasion in Narrative 10 that required the entire team of staff and players to engage in backstage activity. Firstly, the staff engaged with some complex backstage activity to plan how a secret would be kept from the opposition after the player had left and before the final would be played (Goffman, 1959). Once the appropriate plans had been agreed upon by the staff, they were shared with the players so that they were also aware of the situation and able to perform the role that would be expected of them (Goffman, 1959). Therefore, despite the players not being involved in the first backstage meeting, they were required to be involved within a second backstage meeting to ensure the entire team was aware of the situation (Goffman, 1959). Once the plan of action had been agreed upon in this backstage setting, it was up to all the team members (both staff and players) to ensure that the act was performed as well as possible and no outsider from an opposition team learnt of the secret (Goffman, 1959). Therefore, due to the backstage activity the team had undertaken whenever any of the team members were apart, they all knew how to behave and what was expected of them by their team-mates.

Finally, Greg and Barry did not limit their backstage activity to interactions that would occur face-to-face. Within Narrative 4, Barry explained that they had to do adequate backstage preparation before setting the question otherwise players would sometimes misinterpret the question and not provide clips that they were expecting (Goffman, 1959). Therefore, backstage activity was equally important for electronic communications with the players because Greg and Barry wanted to maintain the front and impression that they had created with the players during their face-to-face encounters (Goffman, 1959).

Due to the expectations on the frontstage performances, Greg and Barry had to undertake sufficient preparation before their performances to ensure that they were consistent in the message that they conveyed to their audience. In continuing the theatrical metaphor, this backstage preparation allows Greg and Barry to develop a script for what will



occur within the meeting, and whilst this script may not be a literal script, it ensures that both coaches are aware of the key points that need to be delivered in the video-based feedback session. Therefore, Greg and Barry were engaging with backstage work to assist them when they were giving a frontstage performance to the audience. In contrast, the backstage area is somewhere that “the team can run through its performance, checking for offending expressions when no audience is present to be affronted by them; here poor members of the team, who are expressively inept, can be schooled or dropped from the performance” (Goffman, 1959, p. 115).

Goffman (1959, p. 114) described the nature of a backstage environment “as a place, relative to a given performance, where the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course” (1959, p. 114). The main difference between the frontstage and backstage areas is the presence of an audience in the frontstage setting. Due to there not being an audience within the backstage environment, it allows the “illusions and impressions” of the frontstage performance to be “openly constructed” (Goffman, 1959, p. 114). Throughout the narratives the use of a backstage area by the performers was a common occurrence, which can be seen by the examples presented within this section.

## **5.5 ‘It’s a secret’**

Within the narratives it became apparent that because of the nature of the front and backstage regions, information that was discussed in a backstage environment might not always be shared with an audience in the frontstage setting. For example, in Narrative 1, the players were unaware of the discussions that Greg, Barry and I had and because we did not share that information, it can be argued that we kept a secret about our backstage

behaviour. Therefore, individuals who were part of performance teams had to keep secrets from the audience to maintain their desired image.

Goffman (1959) explained how when actors perform in teams the individuals involved work together to control the information that gets passed onto the audience members. Therefore, in order to stop the audience acquiring destructive information “a team must be able to keep secrets and have secrets kept” (Goffman, 1959, p. 141); his work went on to discuss a range of identifiable secret types. These are *dark* (i.e. “facts about a team which it knows and conceals and which are incompatible with the image of self that the team attempts to maintain before its audience” Goffman, 1959, p. 141), *strategic* (i.e. “intentions and capacities of a team which it conceals from its audience in order to prevent them from adapting effectively to the state of affairs the team is planning to bring about” Goffman, 1959, p. 141), *inside* (i.e. “ones whose possession marks an individual as being a member of a group and helps the group feel separate and different from those individuals who are not in the know” Goffman, 1959, p. 142), *entrusted* (i.e. “the kind which the possessor is obliged to keep because of his relation to the team to which the secret refers” Goffman, 1959, p. 143) and *free* (“somebody else's secret known to oneself that one could disclose without discrediting the image one was presenting of oneself” Goffman, 1959, p. 143) secrets. While Goffman (1959, p. 141) presented each type of secret separately for analytical purposes, it is important to note that he was of the belief that “any particular secret can represent more than one such type”.

Throughout half of the narratives examples of different types of secrets can be viewed, with perhaps the most obvious example seen in Narrative 10. This narrative explained how a player made his decision and then informed the coaches and his teammates of this choice and how everyone worked together to develop the different options. The blog quoted within narrative touched upon how the entire team tried to contain this

information and keep it a secret from opposition teams in order to give them a competitive advantage (Goffman, 1959). Due to the nature of the secret being kept by the team, it can be described as three different secrets at the same time which are strategic, inside and entrusted secrets (Goffman, 1959). The reason why the secrets are these kinds are because the team did not want the opposition to gain an advantage against them during matches by finding out the information beforehand (strategic), only the team members were aware of the information (inside), and the team members were obliged not to share the information with anyone else as it would have been viewed as letting your team-mates down (entrusted).

Other narratives also included the use of secrets, such as in Narrative 1 where I worked with Greg and Barry to plan and prepare for a video-based feedback session. As far as I was aware, the discussions that we had during the preparation were not shared with anyone else and therefore our performance team had kept a secret from everybody else. Once again, the nature of the secret can be viewed as strategic, as the performance team does not want to share with the audience what it was going to do beforehand (Goffman, 1959).

Additionally, Narrative 3 demonstrated how the players had discussions amongst themselves about their feelings towards the video-based feedback sessions, and team meetings in general. Due to their feelings being negative in nature, these opinions were not compatible with the image they wished to portray to Greg, Barry and other members of staff. Therefore, the types of secret that the players were keeping can be described as dark, entrusted and inside (Goffman, 1959).

Furthermore, the creation of the WhatsApp group as a source for video-based feedback can also be seen as an example of secrets being kept within the team. As the previous Performance Analyst (Rich) and the players created this group without the

knowledge of either Greg or Barry, and did not include them within the group, it can be argued that the group members kept this information a secret from Greg and Barry. However, it depends on how the situation is viewed to which type of secret it can be described as. Rich may have wanted to keep this information a secret from them in an attempt to further his own coaching ambitions, in which case it could be viewed as a dark and strategic secret (Goffman, 1959). However, the players may not have been aware of Rich's intentions and therefore viewed the secret differently to Rich. Therefore, the players within the group would have viewed it as an inside or entrusted secret (Goffman, 1959).

Finally, in the narrative 'The script writer' it was apparent that the Psychologist (Sam) was unaware that Greg was going to use his words within the team meeting, and so when he heard the phrase used during the session he was surprised. Therefore, Greg not only kept this information a secret from Sam, but also from the rest of the team. The type of secret that Greg kept can be viewed as dark (Goffman, 1959). Also, Sam then kept this information secret from the players and other staff members and therefore the type of secret that he kept can be described as both dark, inside and entrusted (Goffman, 1959).

## **5.6 Unexpected behaviour**

There were occasions during the narratives when individuals did not behave in a manner that would be normally expected of them. An example of this can be witnessed in Narrative 7 when the Performance Director (Matt) interrupted a team meeting being delivered by Greg and Barry to share his opinion with the players. Again, these examples can be explained by using the work of Goffman (1959) where he discussed various types of characters that an individual can adopt, the characters were referred to as a 'discrepant roles'. Examples of different types of these roles include: an *outsider* (i.e. they "know neither

the secrets of the performance nor the appearance of reality fostered by it” and “are excluded from both [front and back] regions” Goffman, 1959, p. 144), an *informer* (i.e. “someone who pretends to the performers to be a member of their team, is allowed to come backstage and acquire destructive information, and then openly or secretly sells out the show to the audience” Goffman, 1959, p. 145), a *shill* (i.e. “someone who acts as though he were an ordinary member of the audience but is in fact in league with the performers” Goffman, 1959, p.145), a *go-between* (i.e. someone who “learns the secrets of each side and gives each side the true impression that he will keep its secrets; but he tends to give each side the false impression that he is more loyal to it than to the other” Goffman, 1959, p. 148) and *colleagues* (i.e. “persons who present the same routine to the same kind of audience but who do not participate together, as team-mates do, at the same time and place before the same particular audience” Goffman, 1959, p. 158-159). Additionally, Goffman (1959, p. 163) discusses *renegades*, who take a moral stand and “sell out to audience the secrets of the act that his one-time brethren are still performing” giving the reason that “it is better to be true to the ideals of the role than to the performers who falsely present themselves in it”.

Goffman (1959) also said that as well as the different discrepant roles that a person can bring into a social establishment, a team can treat an individual as if he is not there. This is “a pointed way of expressing hostility to an individual who has conducted himself improperly. In such situations, the important show is to show the outcast that he is being ignored, and the activity that is carried on in order to demonstrate this may itself be of secondary importance” (Goffman, 1959, p. 152).

In the Findings, there were various occasions when a member of the team can be viewed as playing a discrepant role. For example, in Narrative 5 it can be argued that the Psychologist (Sam) had been acting as a go-between for the players and coaches about reviewing the training clips quicker after the event (Goffman, 1959). In this situation, Sam

would not have to have kept secrets from either side while acting as a go-between. However, Goffman (1959, p. 149) also suggested that a go-between “may serve as a means of conveying tentative overtures from one side to the other which, if openly presented, might lead to an embarrassing acceptance or rejection”. This quote by Goffman (1959) resonates more clearly with this particular narrative as neither the players or coaches are made to look foolish in front of each other, but both sides can convey their opinion to the other via Sam and ultimately bring about change for the benefit of everyone involved.

Another example can be viewed in Narrative 7, where a coach led session, which was discussing specific pre-planned issues with the players, was ‘hijacked’ by Matt for a period of time. To begin with Greg invited a contribution from Matt, at which point Matt’s role within the session changed from a silent audience member to becoming a frontstage actor who was presenting information with Greg and Barry (Goffman, 1959). This change in role also demonstrates how Matt was playing the role of a shill because he acted as a regular member of the audience until he was invited to join the performance by Greg (Goffman, 1959). Whilst the players might view Matt as a colleague of Greg and Barry, they were unaware that he was going to join in this particular performance and therefore he can be described as a shill (Goffman, 1959).

Sometimes in the narratives more than one individual can be described as having played a discrepant role. In ‘The disagreement’, it can be contended that either Barry or Greg played a discrepant role during the team meeting. Firstly, it can be argued that Barry treated Greg as an ‘outsider’ and did not inform him what he was going to talk to the players about during the team meeting (Goffman, 1959). Therefore, Barry might be considered a ‘renegade’ who is doing what he wants and not working with Greg, his teammate, even though the option Barry has chosen might not be the best option for the players or what his teammate wants him to do (Goffman, 1959). Alternatively, Greg might have known what

Barry was doing and let him continue doing it in front of the players, only to provide an alternative opinion which would discredit and undermine Barry in front of the audience so that he would lose face with the audience and end up feeling embarrassed (Goffman, 1959). Therefore, Greg would be viewed as a renegade too (Goffman, 1959).

Finally, Narrative 10 explained how the entire team of players and staff had to put on a performance to ensure no-one else found out that a player would not be present for the final match of the European Championships. Due to the lack of knowledge before the final match, it can be argued that the team put on a good performance in front of the audience (opposition teams) to ensure the secret remained hidden from them (Goffman, 1959). However, there was an outsider who came to speak to Sam and me before the final who revealed that he might have had inside information (Goffman, 1959). Therefore, he was trying to change his role from that of an outsider to an insider by attempting to acquire information about the team, consequently someone within the team may have been playing a discrepant role by sharing this information with an outsider (Goffman, 1959). This discrepant role can be described as an informer, because somebody within the team was sharing the information with an audience member (Goffman, 1959). Even though it was not known to certain team members how this information was acquired, and whether there was an informer within the team, the secret was still kept from the opposition for the final match (Goffman, 1959). Therefore, despite gaining potentially destructive information, the individual outside the team can also be viewed as a shill because despite being aware of the secret the team was keeping he did not share this information with anybody else (Goffman, 1959).

In addition to adopting discrepant roles, sometimes individuals within the team engaged in forms of communication that were not compatible with the impression that the performance team was seeking to portray. For example, in Narrative 2 Greg explained how

he and Barry managed their impressions while presenting information back to the players, but they were not so restrained when they are talking to each other about the players during their preparation for the team meetings. Here, in the backstage area they can talk openly and sometimes derogatively to each other about the players without offending anyone (Goffman, 1959). Greg explained that “away from that [a team meeting] we will be a lot more critical of players” and when asked for an example he explained that he might say to Barry “fucking hell, what the hell was Cameron doing there?” but then when having the conversation with Cameron he would say “this might have been the way to do it better”. In his own words he tries “to be a lot more measured when I’m talking to them”, this is a clear example of how he manages his behaviour in the presence of an audience, but when he is in a backstage environment he can relax and speak freely to his assistant because the audience is absent from the performance (Goffman, 1959). However, Goffman (1959, p. 168) also referred to this type of behaviour as ‘treatment of the absent’ and suggested that when a performance team interacts in the backstage environment, members of the team “very regularly derogate the audience in a way that is inconsistent with the face-to-face treatment that is given to the audience”. According to Goffman (1959), team-mates often play out satires through mock role-playing and apply uncomplimentary terms of reference when discussing audience members. While performers will occasionally praise their audience, Goffman (1959, p.169) argued that “secret derogation seems to be much more common than secret praise, perhaps because such derogation serves to maintain the solidarity of the team, demonstrating mutual regard at the expense of those absent”.

Additionally, in Narrative 1, Greg explained how after a video-based feedback session he would sometimes ask Matt for feedback on his performance and what improvements could be made for when he delivered future sessions. Goffman (1959) described this type of communication as ‘staging talk’ and it referred to the occasions during



which team-mates prepare for upcoming performances and reflect upon previous ones. In Goffman's (1959, p. 173-4) words:

Questions are raised about the condition of sign-equipment; stands, lines and positions are tentatively brought forth and 'cleared' by the assembled membership; the merits and demerits of available front regions are analysed; the size and character of possible audiences for the performance are considered; past performance disruptions and likely disruptions are talked about; news about the teams of one's colleagues is transmitted; the reception given one's last performance is mulled over in what are sometimes called 'post mortems'; wounds are licked and morale is strengthened for the next performance.

There are other examples of staging talk in the narratives presented. Firstly, in 'This is unacceptable' (Narrative 7), Greg described how after the session he had a conversation with Matt to discuss what had occurred during the session. Matt asked for Greg's opinion about his contribution and Greg explained how his speech had provided a platform for him to build upon and was therefore happy with the contribution. Additionally, in 'The script writer' (Narrative 8), Sam explained how he questioned Greg after the team meeting about why he had quoted him directly within the session. The three narratives discussed are all examples of staging talk concerning how Greg would get advice on his performance and how it should be altered for the next meeting with the players (Goffman, 1959).

Finally, another type of communication demonstrated by Greg and Barry during video-based feedback sessions was when they would ask me to play certain video clips to the players, but they did not want to give away what was about to happen in the video, or other videos that might be shown within the session. Therefore, Greg and Barry would use

coded messages that I would be able to understand but would not give any information away to the audience (Goffman, 1959). Additionally, Greg and Barry may have used similar tactics during a performance to ensure that the performance was going to plan or to adapt the plan if one of them needed assistance with a certain aspect of the performance (Goffman, 1959). This is known as 'team collusion' and refers to "any collusive communication which is carefully conveyed in such a way as to cause no threat to the illusion that is being fostered for the audience" (Goffman, 1959, p. 175). Therefore, team collusion is when members of the performance team employ certain tactics like secret signals and coded verbal messages to surreptitiously transmit and receive pertinent information, request for assistance, and engage in secret derogation of the audience (Goffman, 1959). By adopting these types of techniques, "performers can affirm a backstage solidarity even while engaged in a performance, expressing with impunity unacceptable things about the audience as well as things about themselves that the audience would find unacceptable" (Goffman, 1959, p. 175).

## **5.7 Section summary**

This chapter has highlighted how the participants and I presented ourselves when in the presence of others. It began by demonstrating how video-based feedback sessions can be better understood through Goffman's (1959) work on theatrical performances. Each of the participants displayed certain behaviours when in the presence of an audience to ensure that an appropriate impression was created. However, the participants were not always able to maintain their desired impression. The consequences for failing to maintain their frontstage act was usually embarrassment and loss of face for the individuals involved (Goffman, 1959).

During a frontstage performance, individuals sometimes collaborated with others in performance teams and worked together to give a unified performance to their audience (Goffman, 1959). This unified performance required planning so that the actors were able to understand what was expected of them. This planning was undertaken in an area away from the audience, which Goffman (1959) referred to as the backstage region. In this region the performance team, usually Greg and Barry, were able to speak freely to construct their upcoming video-based feedback session. Within this backstage region, individuals sometimes made comments that were not compatible with their desired impression. Therefore, secrets had to be kept so that these opinions were not shared with the audience (Goffman, 1959). Different kinds of secrets were discussed, and examples highlighted from within the narratives.

Sometimes individuals within a performance team did not always behave in a manner that was expected of them by either their teammates or the audience. When this occurred Goffman (1959) described how individuals can be viewed as playing a discrepant role. Again, examples of when individuals played different discrepant roles within the narratives were highlighted. Finally, the chapter discussed how individuals sometimes communicated in a manner that was not in-keeping with the character they wanted to portray.

## **Chapter 6 – Conclusion**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to provide a summary of the key findings from the research project. Specifically, I will revisit the research questions outlined in Chapter 1 to demonstrate how the Findings and Discussion chapters answer these questions (RQs 1-3). Additionally, this chapter will discuss what I consider to be the empirical and theoretical contributions of this work for both the sports coaching and the performance analysis literature. Following this, I will outline some possible areas for future research investigations within the disciplines of sports coaching and performance analysis. Finally, some of the limitations and difficulties that I faced whilst undertaking this research project shall be considered.

### **6.2 Summary of key findings**

The methodological and theoretical choices that have been taken throughout this thesis have been shaped by the research objective and the research questions outlined within the Introduction (Chapter 1). This has enabled new empirical and theoretical insights to be uncovered, which contributes towards a novel understanding of the use of video-based feedback within elite sport. Each of these research questions will now be discussed in relation to the Findings and Discussion (Chapters 4 & 5).

Firstly, the research wanted to investigate the preparation undertaken by coaches for video-based performance analysis sessions, specifically how did they prepare, what did this involve and why did they prepare in this manner. These preparations were explored by using Goffman's (1959) theatrical metaphor, where planning and conversations that occur away from an audience (i.e. the players) is known as a backstage environment. Within this

area, the Coaches (Greg and Barry) were able to speak freely and were not as concerned about maintaining their impression for an audience. This enabled Greg and Barry to construct a plan for the video-based feedback sessions and rehearse different aspects of it without being judged or criticised by an audience. Furthermore, weaker members of the performing team were able to be assisted so that their performance would be as expected during the team meeting. Additionally, as Greg and Barry were able to speak freely in the backstage area, it meant that sometimes views were aired that were not always compatible with the image that they wanted to present during a team meeting. Consequently, they would have to keep secrets from the audience members so that they did not learn about these non-compatible views and opinions.

From what I witnessed, the amount of detail and preparation that was discussed during a backstage area was considerable. Narrative 1 demonstrated some of the conversations that occurred during a backstage environment between myself, Greg and Barry and how much of an influence these had on the frontstage performance. Everyone was aware of the role that they were being asked to play during the performance and what was expected of them from the other team members. These views were covered again during Narrative 2 where Greg and Barry shared information with me about some of their backstage work.

Secondly, the research aimed to explore how coaches and athletes interacted during the video-based performance analysis feedback meetings and if any external factors influenced these interactions, such as recent match performances and previous experiences and events during team meetings. It was highlighted that the types of interactions that occurred during video-based feedback sessions were not spontaneous but had been prepared for by Greg and Barry. The narratives presented in the Findings (Chapter 4) highlighted some examples of what would usually happen during a classroom session. These

sessions were presented to the athletes by either Greg or Barry, and the work of Goffman (1959) was used in the Discussion (Chapter 5) to compare these sessions to a theatrical performance. Since Greg and Barry worked closely with one another, they can be viewed as part of a performance team because they both convey the same message during a frontstage environment. During the narratives, different staff members would join them within this performance team to help their preparation for and delivering of video-based feedback sessions (e.g. Narrative 1, where I was part of this performance team). Due to the nature of the backstage environment, members of the performance team were also required to keep information from the audience so that they did not give away the secrets of the performance. During a frontstage area, the performance team would often present united views and opinions to their audience and not share certain information that was discussed in a backstage environment.

However, during the frontstage environment, the interactions did not always go according to the backstage plans that were discussed by Greg, Barry and other members of the performance team. This is because individuals, either within the performance team or the audience, can be viewed as adopting a discrepant role; this role is sometimes not compatible with the image that they are trying to portray and often leads to embarrassment. For example, Narratives 5, 6 and 7 all demonstrated how certain individuals can adopt a discrepant role during a performance. The consequences of the individual adopting a discrepant role can have differing effects on the performance; these differing effects can be viewed in Narrative 7 (where the performance team still manage to create an impression that the audience members accept) and in Narrative 6 (where the impression that the performance team were trying to create fails and leads to embarrassment for them).

Furthermore, within the video-based feedback sessions Greg and Barry would behave in a manner that was expected of someone in their position by the individuals

witnessing the presentation. Therefore, it was found that the sessions were often controlled by Greg and Barry and they contributed most of the information whilst the players sat and listened to what they were saying. The reason for Greg and Barry behaving like this is because that was how they thought a person in their position should behave and be viewed by their athletes. On the other hand, the athletes also had expectations for how they should behave as an audience member; they were required to pay attention to the information that Greg or Barry were sharing with them and answer any questions that Greg or Barry might ask. Consequently, both sides are required to maintain a certain image that is expected of them by the other, so that the interaction can continue without disruption or embarrassment for the individual or side who does not manage their impression adequately. The actions that the individuals undertook to manage their performances were highlighted within the Discussion (Chapter 5). Whilst I was undertaking participant observations and their interactions, I noticed that I was also engaging in similar impression management skills when in the presence of either Greg and Barry or players. As I was a member of staff there were certain role expectations for me from both other members of staff and the players, therefore I was also required to act in an expected manner and put on a performance when in their presence.

The impact of previous video-based feedback sessions, match performances and other recent events can be witnessed from both the opinion of the performers and the audience. To begin with, the view of the performers shall be covered. Greg and Barry's video-based feedback sessions would also be influenced by how athletes had performed during recent matches. Specifically, Greg commented that "the ones [players] who were on-court a lot were always going to be in the videos a lot". However, when players had received more equal playing time, Greg could be more balanced with the video clips that he shared within the meeting. During the preparations for the Rio Paralympics, Greg commented on how two

players were competing for the same place and in matches one individual made more mistakes than the other and therefore he was shown more frequently in the video-based feedback sessions. The following quote from Greg explains this situation in his own words, “Liam and Simon were vying for the same position, Simon just made less mistakes and so it always seemed to be whenever there was an error in the video footage it was Liam more often than not”. Furthermore, Greg and Barry’s opinion of the player’s importance within the team can also become a factor when reviewing their match footage. This was demonstrated in Narrative 2 when Greg explained that, “if Ben’s on 100% of the time and he’s making mistakes he probably got away with a lot more than most because he was the one player I needed more than anything”.

Additionally, the influences of the interactions during a video-based feedback session can also be viewed from the audience members’ perspective. These views were explored in a few of the different narratives, but perhaps the one that relates most closely to this topic is Narrative 3. Within this narrative, the players attitudes and opinions towards video-based feedback sessions are investigated. The following examples and opinions taken from Narrative 3 demonstrate how past experiences in video-based feedback sessions can influence the players’ attitudes before an upcoming session. Firstly, a player (Mark) explained how past negative experiences of video-based feedback sessions can influence the players’ opinions before a meeting even begins, he shared that he was sometimes “a bit negative going into the meeting” because he thought that “this is going to be another one of those meetings where we don’t get anything out of it”. Additionally, players (Josh and Simon) highlighted how the players did not want to have long discussions within the meetings, especially if Greg and Barry had already decided on what they wanted the players to do in a certain situation. Simon commented that if it turns into a big discussion about a video clip then “people are talking for ages and ages and people just start to switch off”. Furthermore,



a player (Adam) explained how some players will not participate within the sessions, because that is what they have been used to doing within the classroom environment.

As a result of these examples, coaches should be aware that negative views about the video-based feedback sessions appear to be remembered more clearly by the players than positive ones. However, within Narrative 5 a player (Pete) explained how he is “probably more excited about going in to watch a video whilst I’m on-court, rather than I am going into a classroom meeting, because you’re able to see it and then go out and fix it there and then”. Therefore, coaches may want to consider utilising video-based feedback more frequently during their training sessions where possible, rather than reviewing multiple clips from training at the end of a session, day, or training camp.

Finally, the third research question was concerned with investigating whether the video-based feedback sessions were evaluated and reflected upon by either coaches or athletes. Greg and Barry frequently reflected upon the video-based feedback meetings to see how they could be improved and what could be learnt from any mistakes or weaknesses within the session. This was clearly demonstrated during Narrative 2 where Greg stated, “I think that’s just learning from the mistakes we’ve made in the past” and the Psychologist (Sam) commented that, “I think it’s been, you know, learning by experiences and learning by mistakes”. This process of reflection after a meeting became apparent once again during Narrative 7, Greg explained that during a conversation with the Performance Director (Matt) afterwards “he said to me ‘do you think I should have said that?’ and I went ‘well, I was happy for you to, cause it actually gave me the confidence then to add to that’.” Whilst it appears that Greg reflected upon his own performances after a session, at the end of the 4-year cycle the entire programme (staff and players) were encouraged to reflect on their personal performances and other team members. This was demonstrated from a personal point of

view during Narrative 9, but also includes evidence of how the team had learnt from past experiences and then suggested improvements for the future.

The three research questions were focused upon investigating the preparation for, interactions during and evaluations of video-based feedback sessions within an elite sport environment. By utilising theoretical concepts from Goffman's (1959) *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, it has enabled the data to be interpreted in a novel manner which has contributed to our understanding of video-based feedback sessions and advances the existing performance analysis and sports coaching literature.

### **6.3 Implications for the sports coaching literature**

The Findings and Discussion chapters within this thesis have further developed the existing sports coaching literature by drawing upon theoretical concepts from Goffman's (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, which have previously remained underexplored within the discipline. The use of Goffman concepts within sports coaching literature has increased significantly since the early work of Jones et al. (2002), which suggested that Goffman's work offered an important way of further understanding the social complexities of coaching practice. For example, scholars have discussed how coaches feel the need to present themselves to their audience in a particular way, which they believe is expected of them in their role (see Chesterfield et al., 2010; Jones, 2006; Partington & Cushion, 2012; Potrac et al., 2002; Potrac & Jones 2009a, 2009b). Here, a coach may use instructions to demonstrate his knowledge and expertise to the audience and create the correct impression with the players (Potrac et al., 2002). There are comparisons that can be drawn from the previous literature and the Findings and Discussion of this thesis, for

example, within this thesis Greg and Barry discussed how they work together to present a particular image for their audience within their sessions (see Narrative 2).

Partington and Cushion (2012) highlighted that the coach's audience might not always be just their athletes, and that the coach also engaged in face work and impression management when in the presence of peers, parents, opposition coaches and individuals who held positions of authority within their club. Furthermore, Chesterfield et al. (2010) suggested that as well as a coach being required to present a front to fulfil the duties in a manner expected by their audience, a coach also uses props to assist them in creating the impression. For example, a coach may select a particular item of clothing or an outfit which will support them when creating their desired impression (Chesterfield et al., 2010). This use of props was also witnessed within this research, when the Psychologist (Sam) explained how in some team meetings that Greg would use either his iPad or phone to have some notes about what he wanted to discuss within the meeting (see Narrative 8).

Jones (2006) illustrated the potential consequences that can occur when the coach's actions may cause the image that he/she is portraying to breakdown. Ultimately, this would end up in embarrassment for the coach and he would 'lose face' in front of his audience, if the situation cannot be recovered, and the coach is unable to regain their desired image (Jones, 2006). The work of Jones (2006) has similarities to some of the situations outlined in the findings of this thesis, but this research has demonstrated that Greg and Barry were not always able to regain their desired image within the session (see Narrative 6).

Additionally, the work of Consterdine et al. (2013) demonstrated how a coach created a coaching persona through their performance, manner and front. Creating an engaging persona enabled the coach to motivate the athletes that 'bought in' to the persona (Consterdine et al., 2013). However, their work did not discuss what might happen if an

athlete did not buy into the persona that the coach had created. Thompson et al. (2015) discussed how coach's used face work and impression management skills to gain the respect of other coaches, but if their performance was not successful then they would be treated suspiciously by other more senior coaches. This thesis has discussed how these unsuccessful performances can be explained because of an individual adopting a discrepant role within the session (see Narratives 5, 6, 7 & 10).

While some of the literature has previously adopted Goffman concepts such as his work on front, the backstage region, and impression management skills (see Chesterfield et al., 2010; Consterdine et al., 2013; Jones, 2006; Partington & Cushion, 2012; Potrac et al., 2002; Potrac & Jones, 2009a, 2009b; Thompson et al., 2015), this body of literature has tended to view the interactions that occurred in terms of a specific individual involved (e.g. a coach). The work within this thesis contends that whilst individuals do manage their own impression whilst in the presence of an audience, individuals also work together in 'performance teams' to deliver a group impression to the audience (Goffman, 1959). Furthermore, the thesis discovered that because individuals were acting within 'performance teams', they had to keep secrets from the audience that were not in-keeping with the impression that they wanted to create (Goffman, 1959). These different types of secrets that Goffman suggested were first explained within the Literature Review (Chapter 2) of this thesis. Following this explanation, the Discussion (Chapter 5) then considered how Goffman's understanding of secrets were also represented within the Findings (Chapter 4). As individuals keep secrets Goffman (1959) proposed that sometimes these secrets are shared with selected members of the audience and when this occurs it enables them to enact various 'discrepant roles'. These concepts concerning 'performance teams', 'secrets' and 'discrepant roles' have all assisted in beginning to develop an understanding for some of the

complex and social interactions that occur within an elite coaching environment, with a particular focus on video-based feedback sessions.

#### **6.4 Implications for the performance analysis literature**

Within this section, I will explain how my research expands and further develops the previous performance analysis literature. Firstly, the work of Groom et al. (2011) suggested that coaches need to consider their session design, presentation format and delivery approach in order to gain their targeted outcome. My work demonstrates the importance of coaches engaging in pre-meeting preparation in a backstage setting so that the session runs smoothly and goes according to their backstage plan. Additionally, this thesis demonstrated how the sessions did not always go according to Greg and Barry's plan, and this failure often occurred because of discrepant behaviour (Goffman, 1959).

Secondly, Booroff (2016, p. 7) highlighted that there is still "a paucity of empirical research into the practical application and utilisation of video-based performance analysis technology by sports coaches and performance analysts, as well as how athletes understand and engage with such technologies". Therefore, it was suggested that diverse methods should be adopted to gain rich insight to how coaches and athletes experience and engage with video-based performance analysis (Booroff et al., 2016). Furthermore, Nelson et al. (2014) suggested that a limitation of their work was that it was based upon a retrospective snap-shot of the participant's (John) experiences. Therefore, like the work of Groom et al. (2012), my research was conducted 'in situ' so the data was not a description of what has happened in the past. Also, by adopting an ethnographic approach, a rich and detailed account has been provided to demonstrate the work that the coaches undertake in order to conduct these sessions to the players. As previous research has used participants from elite football (see Booroff et al., 2016; Groom et al., 2011, 2012; Magill et al., 2017), when I had

the prospect of studying an elite Paralympic sport this opportunity was taken so that the number of sports being investigated by academics was broadened. By increasing the number of sports being investigated, it was hoped that both coaches and scholars can develop their knowledge and understanding surrounding the use video-based feedback in elite sport.

Additionally, Taylor et al. (2017, p. 3) commented on the relationship “between Claire [the participant], the camera, the recording, the coach and her team-mates”. Their research found that the participant felt like she was under surveillance during the training sessions, even when the coach was not physically present. Furthermore, Taylor et al. (2017) suggested that future research should endeavour to gain a better understanding of how video-based feedback is used by coaches and the impact that it has on the pedagogical experiences of the athletes. In addition, Magill et al. (2017, p. 228) encouraged future research to investigate the social relations that occur where coaching technology is used to develop “a greater understanding of the intended and unforeseen consequences of using technology”. Whilst the social relations have not been explicitly explored in terms of individuals’ emotions, this thesis has helped to explore how coaching technology is used by coaches, their intentions for using it and what occurs when their plan does not work during a session. For example, the players perceptions of the sessions were explored in Narrative 3 and how Greg and Barry embrace technology can be witnessed in both Narrative 4 and 5.

Nelson et al. (2014) found that John could sense how much preparation had been undertaken before a meeting depending on how well the meeting was delivered by the coach, in turn this influenced his opinion of the coach. Players within my study felt similar to John (see Narrative 3), but this research was also able to investigate Greg and Barry’s points of view about when the session did not go according to their plans. If the session did not go as they had planned, they would feel awkward during the session and then disappointed with themselves once the meeting had concluded (see Narratives 2 and 6). Groom et al.

(2012) highlighted the power and control that the coaches held over the academy football players during video-based feedback sessions and suggested that future research may wish to investigate this area with professional adult athletes. Whilst this thesis does not focus upon the power held by Greg and Barry, it does demonstrate how they work together as a 'performance team' to present information to the players (Goffman, 1959). During these interactions between the coaches and players, there are certain expectations placed on the respective roles of the players and coaches. And when these roles and expectations were not kept up then an individual would be viewed as adopting a discrepant role, which would not be compatible with the expected image (Goffman, 1959).

Finally, this thesis has highlighted how Greg and Barry engaged with performance analysis technologies, both in a classroom and on-court setting, as well as uncovering the use of smartphone technology. By demonstrating how the sport used WhatsApp to participate in video-based feedback, this research has uncovered a novel approach to the use of video-based feedback. This has the potential to be investigated further in future research and will be discussed in the Future Research Ideas section later in this chapter.

## **6.5 Reflections on the methodology**

Undertaking an ethnographic research project was a new approach within the performance analysis literature and enabled me to gather the data in situ and not rely upon solely on retrospective interview data. By becoming part of the team, I was able to understand the environment and some of the nuances that occurred within it, which might not have arisen if interviewing was the only method of data collection. However, it took time to build relationships with the participants and gain their respect and trust so that they were open and honest during the interview process. The first few months with the team were

spent getting to know the participants and observing video-based feedback sessions to gain an insight into what occurred. Although no audio recordings were made during this period, I did conduct participant observations. This was not a simple task because I was uncertain on what observations might be relevant to the research and worth collecting. Consequently, I spent a lot of time writing up my field notes to ensure that what I had witnessed had been written down for future reference.

By observing the participants and making field notes, it raised my understanding of the context in which the events were occurring and gave me an opportunity to talk about certain events with the participants during the interview process when that began. This is an opportunity that would not have been available to me if I had only been interviewing the participants, as I would have been unaware of what was occurring within the meetings as well as the day-to-day interactions of the staff and players. Additionally, the observations allowed me to witness and capture everyday activities of the participants, which gave me a holistic and nuanced perspective of the setting, and as such I was able to produce thick descriptions of what had occurred for the narratives within the findings (Chapter 4). Furthermore, by the time I began audio recording sessions the coaches and players were familiar with my presence in the team meetings, therefore, their behaviour did not alter when I turned the Dictaphone on as I had become an accepted member of the team and they had become familiar with my actions as a researcher.

Finally, I had to ensure that when I was constructing the narratives that I did not allow a cultural bias to emerge. In order to achieve this, I used the supervisory team as critical friends to provide alternative views and interpretations of the gathered data. Also, by removing myself from the setting once I had concluded the data collection, I was able to make sure that the narratives were objective accounts of what had occurred.



In conclusion, whilst I had to deal with some difficulties by adopting an ethnographic approach, I believe that it was the best method to use for this research as it enabled me to gain day-to-day access with the team and therefore understand the environment I was investigating from a team members perspective.

## **6.6 Limitations**

Whilst undertaking this PhD research, there were a number of limitations that I encountered during the process. Firstly, due to the funded nature of the PhD at the beginning of the research I wanted to make sure that I committed to any opportunities that were presented to me by the EIS to get experience working with elite sports as a performance analyst. The reason for wanting to take these opportunities was that they were chances to meet new people and potentially build relationships that could prove useful for recruiting participants within the research project. Consequently, I assisted on trips abroad with different sports as well as supporting sports within the UK too, before the opportunity to work as the performance analyst for my sport was eventually presented to me. For example, this included working with sports such as: Wheelchair Basketball (both the Men's and Women's teams), Boxing and Judo, in addition to a number of performance analysis software training sessions and applied sports research forums. These chances to support other sports and network with other performance analysts gave me the opportunity to witness how some analysts worked with their coaches and find out more information about the roles they carried out. However, on reflection, as these opportunities were presented to me at an early phase of my PhD, ultimately, they turned out to be time-consuming and distracted me from reading and writing about my own research. Furthermore, these opportunities did not result in any first-hand data collection chances, but I believe that because of taking these chances my 'theoretical sensitivity' to the performance environment increased, in addition to being

offered the position to work with a sport which I could work with as participants for the thesis.

Once I had begun working with a sport as their performance analyst, there were new difficulties that I had to contend with. In hindsight, the main challenge was to manage the amount of support that I was providing the sport outside of the training camp and competition environment to continue to satisfy their needs, whilst also allowing myself sufficient time to complete my research within the allotted timeframe. I felt like this was a crucial balancing act because if my level of support to the team dropped below their expected standard I was worried that I might be denied the same access within the team for my data collection. On the other hand, I was not able to donate all my time to the sport otherwise I would not have been able to continue my research and particularly the ongoing data analysis process. Therefore, at different stages throughout the research I would allocate each 'side' a higher priority. For example, when I first started working with the team I wanted to create a good impression and gain access to participants and so gave them quite a lot of my time in comparison to my PhD. In contrast, when I felt I had collected sufficient data from the team I tried to reduce the level of support I was providing to the team so that I could concentrate more of my time and effort into writing up this thesis. However, as I had now established a relationship with the sport I was able to explain to them that I needed to focus on writing up my thesis before the deadline, but I did not want to leave the team without any support. Consequently, I recruited an undergraduate student from the university to continue providing support to the team over the final stages of my write-up. This offered an important vocational experience to the student, who was later offered the opportunity to travel with the team to a major international tournament.

Finally, it could be suggested that a limitation of this thesis is the case study approach adopted within this research. Although I believe that it can also be viewed as a strength of

the work, because it examines the specific context under investigation in detail due to the longitudinal nature of the project. As the findings of this research are specific for the interactions that occurred during video-based feedback within the sport, they should not be reduced and generalised in an attempt to account for what occurs in all other elite sports settings. Ruddin (2006, p. 797) argued that “case studies need not make any claim about the generalizability of their findings” because the work should attempt to “illustrate the case they have studied properly, in a way that captures its unique features”. Therefore, when judging the quality of an interpretive case study, Ruddin (2006, p. 804) suggested that there should be a “realignment of the responsibility to generalize away from the researcher towards the reader”. Consequently, readers of this thesis are encouraged to engage in ‘naturalistic generalisation’ and consider the details of the narratives presented in relation to their own experiences and personal context (Melrose, 2010).

## **6.7 Future research ideas**

By uncovering Goffman’s (1959) concepts of performance teams, secrets and discrepant roles it is hoped that future research in the sports coaching field can also consider how individuals might perform as part of a performance team. If coaches work as part of a performance team, do they conceal secrets from their audience during a performance to maintain their desired impression? Finally, what are the consequences if an individual adopts a discrepant role during the interaction, and how is this situation dealt with by other members of the performance team as well as the audience? Whilst this work has looked at these types of interactions and behaviours within video-based feedback sessions, future research could investigate other aspects of the coaching process to see if individuals act as part of performance teams, keep secrets and adopt discrepant roles. Furthermore, to gain

more understanding of these aspects, research should investigate different levels of coaches from community coaches through to elite coaches to see if there are similarities. Additionally, future research could investigate a selection of different sports to explore a variety of cultures and experiences.

Furthermore, it is important to recognise further opportunities to draw upon Goffman's interactionist sociology to explore sports coaching, and in particular, the use of video-based feedback in sport. Works including *'Asylums'* (1961), *'Stigma'* (1963), *'Interaction Ritual'* (1967), *'Strategic Interaction'* (1969), *'Frame Analysis'* (1974) and *'Forms of Talk'* (1981) could be used to deepen our understanding of interactions in sports coaching and social life more broadly. This future work, might for example, provide an alternative concept of how talk is managed and maintained in such settings, and the strategic drivers for individual's talk-in-interaction.

Another area which I would encourage future research to investigate would be the use of technology by coaches as a tool to aid their job. The example within this thesis of how the coaches used WhatsApp to communicate with the players regularly and have discussions about tactics for upcoming games or to reflect on recent performances. However, I believe that this work has only just begun to uncover how it can be used within sports teams. Due to the lack of research concerning this aspect of performance analysis and coaching, I feel that there is still plenty of research that could be undertaken to help aid our understanding of different forms of communication rather than just face-to-face interactions. From viewing the findings of this research, it appears to be a positive tool for the coaches as it enables them to have more frequent conversations with the players whilst not being directly in each other's company, although there could be further strengths that are yet to be discovered. Alternatively, there could be potential dangers and weaknesses when utilising these forms

of communications, consequently more research into this area could aid coaches to embrace and develop their use of modern technology.

When exploring such topics, I encourage researchers to generate rich and detailed accounts of their experiences through various forms of representation to help uncover and convey rich and valuable insights (Groom et al., 2014; Huggan et al., 2014; Smith & Sparkes, 2009a, 2009b). Whilst different forms of representation can further assist the understanding of the complexities involved with video-based feedback, it is important to recognise that different types of representation are available and as such, “informed choices need to be made about when, where, and if they are utilised” (Sparkes & Smith, 2014, p. 177). Therefore, researchers should not just select “a form of representation simply because it is novel” because this would increase “the danger of fetishizing form and elevating style, or panache, over content” (Groom et al., 2014, p. 94). Consequently, researchers should consider a range of matters before selecting what type of representation they are going to adopt, for example, the following bullet points cover some areas for contemplation:

- What is the nature of the data?
- How would the representation align to the epistemological and ontological commitments of the project?
- What theoretical point is being made?
- What truths can be told?
- What is the intended purpose of writing up the research?
- And who is the planned audience? (Groom et al., 2014; Smith 2010)

I believe that the most important factor when selecting an appropriate methodological approach and form of representation is to endeavour to develop a greater

understanding surrounding the complexities of video-based feedback sessions and their role within the coaching process.

## **6.8 Summary**

In this chapter, I have outlined the empirical and theoretical contributions of this thesis to the understanding of the use of video-based feedback within sports coaching. In particular, I discussed how this research study has managed to answer the research questions posed within the Introduction (Chapter 1) by adopting concepts from Goffman's (1959) *'Presentation of Self in Everyday Life'*. By utilising new concepts from this work, more avenues for future research ideas have been suggested for scholars to adopt as they investigate sports coaching in various contexts. Additionally, as technology advances, coaches will find new methods to assist them with their coaching practices, therefore, these methods will provide future areas for investigation as our academic knowledge about these topics will be limited.

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## Appendix A – The use of Goffman in sporting literature

Author	Year	Journal	Title	Goffman Work Utilised
Hughes & Coakley	1991	Sociology of Sport Journal	Positive deviance among athletes: The implications of overconformity to the sport ethic	Interaction Ritual
Schmitt	1993	Sociology of Sport Journal	Enhancing frame analysis: five laminating functions of language in the 1987 NFL strike	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life Frame Analysis Forms of Talk The Neglected Situation
Ward Jr.	1998	Sociology of Sport Journal	Rituals, first impressions and the opening day home advantage	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life Interaction Ritual
Mullan	1999	International Journal of the History of Sport	Sport, ethnicity and the reconstruction of the self: Baseball in Americas internment camps	Asylums Interaction Ritual
d'Arripe-Longueville, Saury, Fournier & Durand	2001	Journal of Applied Sport Psychology	Coach-athlete interaction during elite archery competitions: an application of methodological frameworks used in ergonomics research to sport psychology	Frame Analysis
Jones, Armour & Potrac	2002	Quest	Understanding the coaching process: A framework for social analysis	Where the Action is Presentation of Self in Everyday Life
Potrac, Jones & Armour	2002	Sport, Education and Society	'It's All About Getting Respect': The Coaching Behaviours of an Expert English Soccer Coach	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life Interaction Ritual
Jones, Armour & Potrac	2003	Sport, Education and Society	Constructing Expert Knowledge: A Case Study of a Top-level Professional Soccer Coach	Where the Action is
Mennesson & Clement	2003	International Review for the Sociology of Sport	Homosociability and homosexuality: The case of soccer played by women	Stigma

**Appendix A Cont. The use of Goffman in sporting literature**

Author	Year	Journal	Title	Goffman Work Utilised
Pike & Maguire	2003	Sociology of Sport Journal	Injury in women's sport: Classifying key elements of "risk encounters"	Stigma Strategic Interaction Interaction Ritual Presentation of Self in Everyday Life Where the Action is
King	2004	Leisure Studies	Race and cultural identity: Playing the race game inside football	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life
O'Neill	2004	International Review for the Sociology of Sport	Policing football in Scotland: The forgotten team	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life
Pike	2005	International Review for the Sociology of Sport	Doctors just say "rest and take ibuprofen": A critical examination of the role of 'non-orthodox' health care in women's sport	Asylums Stigma Interaction Ritual Where the Action is Strategic Interaction Presentation of Self in Everyday Life
Jones	2006	Qualitative Inquiry	Dilemmas, Maintaining 'Face' and Paranoia: An Average Coaching Life	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life Stigma Strategic Interaction The Interaction Order
Roderick	2006	Sociology of Health & Illness	Adding insult to injury: workplace injury in English professional football	Encounters Stigma Where the Action is

**Appendix A Cont. The use of Goffman in sporting literature**

<b>Author</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Journal</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Goffman Work Utilised</b>
Roderick	2006	Work, Employment and Society	A very precarious profession: uncertainty in the working lives of professional footballers	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life Encounters Where the Action is
Guerandel & Mennesson	2007	International Review for the Sociology of Sport	Gender construction in judo interactions	Communication conduct in an island community Presentation of Self in Everyday Life Asylums Interaction Ritual Relation in Public Frame Analysis Gender Advertisements The Interaction Order
Pike & Beames	2007	Leisure Studies	A Critical Interactionist Analysis of 'Youth Development' Expeditions	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life Asylums Encounters Stigma Interaction Ritual
Beames & Pike	2008	Australian Journal of Outdoor Education	Goffman goes rock climbing: using creative fiction to explore the presentation of self in outdoor education	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life Interaction Ritual Communication conduct in an island community
Potrac & Jones	2009	Quest	Power, conflict and cooperation: Toward a micropolitics of coaching	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life Stigma On Face Work
Potrac & Jones	2009	Sociology of Sport Journal	Micropolitical workings in semi-professional football	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life

# Appendix A Cont. The use of Goffman in sporting literature

Author	Year	Journal	Title	Goffman Work Utilised
Chesterfield, Potrac & Jones	2010	Sport, Education and Society	'Studentship' and 'impression management' in an advanced soccer coach education award	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life
Gimlin	2010	Sociology of Sport Journal	Uncivil attention and the public runner	The Interaction Order Relations in Public Interaction Ritual Behaviour in Public Places Presentation of Self in Everyday Life
Purdy & Jones	2011	Sociology of Sport Journal	Choppy Waters: Elite Rowers' Perceptions of Coaching	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life
Cottingham	2012	Sociology of Sport Journal	Interaction ritual theory and sports fans: Emotion, symbols, and solidarity	Asylums Interaction Ritual
Knoblauch & Schnettler	2012	Qualitative Research	Videography: Analysing video data as a 'focused' ethnographic and hermeneutical exercise	Forms of Talk The Interaction Order Behaviour in Public Places
Lebel & Danylchuk	2012	International Journal of Sport Communication	How tweet it is: A gendered analysis of professional tennis players' self-presentation on Twitter	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life Frame Analysis
Manley, Palmer & Roderick	2012	Surveillance & Society	Disciplinary Power, the Oligopticon and Rhizomatic Surveillance in Elite Sports Academies	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life Asylums
Partington & Cushion	2012	Sports Coaching Review	Performance during performance: using Goffman to understand the behaviours of elite youth football coaches during games	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life Encounters Stigma Interaction Ritual Strategic Interaction Frame Analysis

**Appendix A Cont. The use of Goffman in sporting literature**

<b>Author</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Journal</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Goffman Work Utilised</b>
Pike	2012	International Review for the Sociology of Sport	Aquatic antiques: Swimming off this mortal coil?	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life Asylums Stigma Interaction Ritual Where the Action is
Consterdine, Newton & Piggin	2013	Sports Coaching Review	Time to take the stage: a contextual study of a high performance coach	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life Encounters
Nelson, Potrac, Gilbourne, Allanson, Gale & Marshall	2013	Sociology of Sport Journal	Thinking, feeling, acting: The case of a semi- professional soccer coach	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life
Pike	2013	Leisure Studies	The role of fiction in (mis)representing later life leisure activities	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life Stigma Interaction Ritual Where the Action is
Purdy & Jones	2013	Sport, Education & Society	Changing personas and evolving identities: The contestation and renegotiation of researcher roles in fieldwork	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life Interaction Ritual Frame Analysis On Field Work
Wilson	2013	Journal of Sociolinguistics	Interaction without walls: Analysing leadership discourse through dramaturgy and participation	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life Frame Analysis Forms of Talk
Bonde	2014	Sport in Society	Between tightness and looseness: The politics of the London Games in the light of the Beijing Games	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life Behaviour in Public Places

**Appendix A Cont. The use of Goffman in sporting literature**



Author	Year	Journal	Title	Goffman Work Utilised
Debanne	2014	International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching	Techniques used by coaches to influence referees in professional team handball	Asylums
Hansen & Andersen	2014	Sports Coaching Review	Coaching elite athletes: How coaches stimulate elite athletes' reflection	Frame Analysis
Malcolm	2014	International Review for the Sociology of Sport	The social construction of the sociology of sport: A professional project	Encounters
Pate, Hardin & Ruihley	2014	International Journal of Sport Management & Marketing	Speak for yourself: Analysing how US athletes used self-presentation on Twitter during the 2012 London Paralympic Games	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life Frame Analysis
Radmann	2014	Soccer & Society	Hooligans: nice guys or the last alpha males? A study of football supporters' self-image	Stigma Interaction Ritual Presentation of Self in Everyday Life
Roderick	2014	Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health	From identification to dis-identification: case studies of job loss in professional football	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life Encounters Cooling the Mark Out
Ronglan & Aggerholm	2014	Sports Coaching Review	Humour helps: Elite sports coaching as a balancing act	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life Encounters Interaction Ritual
Agyemang, Williams & Kim	2015	Sport Management Review	"Scandalous!": Reputation, impression management, and employee assistance programs (EAPs) in the NBA	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life

#### Appendix A Cont. The use of Goffman in sporting literature

<b>Author</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Journal</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Goffman Work Utilised</b>
Beaumont & Brown	2015	Leisure Sciences	'Once a local surfer, always a local surfer': Local surfing careers in a Southwest English village	Asylums
Benton	2015	Journal of Popular Culture	Lamination as Slamination: Irwin R. Schyster and the construction of Antisemitism in professional wrestling	Frame Analysis
Cunningham, Simmons, Mascarenhas & Redhead	2015	Movement & Sport Sciences	Exploring player communication in interactions with sport officials	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life Interaction Ritual Forms of Talk
Darko & Mackintosh	2015	Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health	Don't you feel bad watching the Olympics, watching us? A qualitative analysis of London 2012 Olympics influence on family sports participation and physical activity	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life
Jones & Corsby	2015	Quest	A case for coach Garfinkel: Decision making and what we already know	Interaction Ritual Frame Analysis
Peterson	2015	Sociology Compass	Connecting Social Psychology and the Sociology of Sport: Using Goffman as a Framework for Sociological Sports Research	Interaction Ritual Cooling the mark out
Thing & Ronglan	2015	Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports	Athlete confessions: The sports biography as an interaction ritual	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life Asylums Interaction Ritual Relations in Public

**Appendix A Cont. The use of Goffman in sporting literature**

<b>Author</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Journal</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Goffman Work Utilised</b>
Guerin-Eagleman & Burch	2016	Sport Management Review	Communicating via photographs: A gendered analysis of Olympic athletes' visual self-presentation on Instagram	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life
Manley, Morgan & Atkinson	2016	International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics	Mzungu!: implications of identity, role formation and programme delivery in the sport for development movement	Presentation of Self in Everyday Life Encounters Strategic Interaction Interaction Ritual Asylums
Williams & Manley	2016	Sport, Education & Society	Elite coaching and the technocratic engineer: thanking the boys at Microsoft	Asylums
Richard, Joncheray & Dugas	2017	International Review for the Sociology of Sport	Disabled sportswomen and gender construction in powerchair football	Stigma Les moments et leurs hommes The arrangement between the sexes La ritualisation de la féminité

## **Appendix B – Example field notes**

### Day 1

As I got in the car to drive across to Leicester I was uncertain what to expect from the upcoming days. I was off to meet the squad at their training camp for the first time, a sport I knew nothing about. I had received a phone call a few weeks before asking if I would be interested in working with the squad as their performance analyst as part of my PhD study. I had already been away on a few trips with the GB Wheelchair Basketball teams and GB Boxing, but they had been one offs where simple filming and passing on video had been appreciated. I felt that this probably wasn't going to be acceptable moving forwards and more would be expected of me and the skills I was expected to have in this position. So as I was driving along I was thinking about what I should say to the coach and staff when I met them about my experiences as a performance analyst – should I just admit that I was new to this role and didn't really know what to do, or should I try and fake it and pretend I know what I'm doing and just hope I don't get found out. If I could just pretend like I know what I'm doing so I don't embarrass myself to these professional coaches, athletes and staff. I'm sure there are people outside of the sport who would be able to help me, like former university lecturers who have experienced being performance analysts too, perhaps I could turn to them for advice with looking stupid in front of current professionals. After finding where I was supposed to be and parking my car, I took a deep breath and prepared myself to walk into the venue to meet everyone for the first time, whilst still uncertain about what to say and do.

I walked in and was greeted by a few of the members of the support staff who introduced themselves to me whilst the players and coaches were busy with the training session. I spent a bit of time talking to the outgoing analyst about the role and what would be expected of me, and the equipment that the sport has that I would receive from him at the end of the training camp. We then spent some time watching the players train (names were given but I was struggling to remember so many) so I could begin to understand the sport and what bits in particular the coaches may want my help with.

As the morning session began to wind down and the players took part in what appeared to be their cool down, the coach and his assistant came over to where I had been sat watching the session and introduced themselves to me. A few pleasantries were exchanged, some more names were added to my mental list for me to try and remember, but these two were going straight to the top of the list, I didn't want to forget either of these. The coaches then had to excuse themselves as a player had called them over to speak with the squad as they had finished their cool down and stretching. Some of the other staff had been out to get lunch from the local supermarket for the players to have at the end of the session and were busy preparing it for them. I was asked if I could help get some tables out for them to eat from and some chairs for the staff to use too, I was happy to oblige and tried to be helpful as I wanted to make a good first impression not only with the coaches but the entire staff team and players too. Once all the players had finished their session they started to help themselves to the food that had been laid out upon the table and then sat round the empty tables to eat their food. After the last player had got all the food they required the staff began to sort themselves out with lunch too, I didn't want to seem too eager so let other members of staff go first but I was definitely feeling hungry by this point as I'd not had any breakfast before leaving home this morning. I got a plate full of food and made my way over to where the other staff were sat, there was a bit of general chat as everyone said who they were and what their role was, but mainly people wanted to know more about me, like where I was from and what I was doing and how had I been suggested for this position. I tried to be chatty and answered all the questions politely but inside I definitely felt uncomfortable as if I was under a spotlight being interrogated. Looking back on the situation now it is easy to see that they were just being friendly and were showing an interest in me, and I would certainly have felt worse if they had just ignored me completely and acted like I wasn't there!

Once we had all finished eating I went and had more of a chat with the coaches and they asked about my knowledge of the sport, I let them know that I didn't know very much at all but had watched a YouTube video the day before to try and help me prepare for today. I also let them know that members of staff

had been explaining bits and pieces of the game this morning whilst the training session was going on. They said they would explain some of the basics of the sport, which they proceeded to do, but it should be fairly easy to pick up the finer details as I watched more training sessions and spent more time involved with the sport. During our conversation a new member of staff entered the sports hall and after greeting a few of the players and other members of staff he came over to join us. After he said hello to the group I immediately knew that it was the performance director for the sport from speaking to him on the phone in the build up to me joining the sport. After introducing himself formally to me, he turned to the coaches and enquired into how the morning session had gone and what they had planned for this afternoon, after appearing to get a satisfactory reply from the coaches he turned to me and asked if we could go and sit in the reception area and have a chat about the expectations that we both had for my upcoming time with the sport. I was happy to do this, but suddenly felt a new wave of nerves and panic sweep over me that had slowly subsided over the course of the morning. I hadn't thought about what expectations I had and was very aware that if I admitted that it was probably not the answer that they would be expecting to get. I was also concerned about their expectations of me and if I would be able to deliver what they were after due to limited knowledge of the sport and lack of experience working in a performance analysis position previously.

With a mixture of nerves and fear I followed the performance director out into the reception area and sat down at the table with him. He began by telling me a bit about his history with the sport and when he first became the performance director and what his plans for the sport were, it all seemed very positive. We then discussed my PhD study and how they would be willing to take part in my study in return for my services as a performance analyst; this had been previously discussed and I was happy to agree to this mutually beneficial arrangement. Any nerves and fear that I had felt walking into the reception area had now started to subside; I had felt on safer ground talking about my PhD and previous education. The conversation progressed, and I was now being told about the process for making expenses claims, the environment that the staff team were trying to create and how everybody had to help out

where possible even if that wasn't part of the role of their specific job. I didn't feel that helping out where needed would be too challenging so happily agreed to do this. After a while the conversation started to naturally come to an end and so it was suggested that we went back into the sports hall to watch the afternoon training session and I was told that in the future if I ever had any questions I could just pick up the phone or send a text message to ask. It all seemed very friendly and I felt annoyed with myself for getting nervous and being fearful before the meeting. No-one was trying to catch me out about anything, it seemed to me like they wanted my help and were grateful for it so just wanted to make me feel as welcome as possible.

I sat and watched the remainder of the training session, occasionally asking members of staff about what was occurring to help with my learning of the sport. As the session was drawing to a close and the players began a cool down the coaches came over and thanked me for coming and spending the day with them and asked if I would be returning tomorrow. I replied stating I would happily come back tomorrow and hoped I would continue learning about the sport and it would also be a chance for the equipment to be handed over to me so that I would be ready to start work at the first camp of the New Year in January. They said that at that camp in January there would be a chance for the three of us to sit down and discuss what they wanted from my role and what I was able to do whilst the players took part in on-court field testing or a strength and conditioning session that did not require either of them to be present. I commented how this would probably be beneficial for both of us and that I would write down any questions I thought of ready for that meeting. I then said my goodbyes to everyone and headed back to my car for what would probably be a long drive back home through rush hour traffic.

## Day 2

The following day I woke up feeling like I hadn't had enough sleep after a long day yesterday, but at least it was Friday now, and I'd be able to have a lie-in tomorrow morning to catch up on some sleep. Before that I had to head back to spend another day with the squad, after feeling that yesterday had gone

ok I was certainly less worried and concerned about going back today. The main challenge for today would be making sure that I remembered everybody's names; I didn't want to be embarrassed by forgetting somebody's name. The journey to the training venue was uneventful and soon I was walking back through the same doors I had done 24 hours ago, this time it seemed much easier perhaps I didn't think there was as much to worry about today.

I walked into the sports hall and greeted some of the staff and players that were already there; thankfully people were in groups, so I could just give a general greeting rather than individual ones where I might need to remember names. Soon the coaches got the players warming up and I was sat with the other members of staff watching the session and gaining more knowledge about the sport. The outgoing performance analyst was sharing useful information about some of the roles I would be required to undertake and giving me access to certain websites and groups (Dropbox, Dartfish TV, and WhatsApp). The morning passed quickly with a lot of information being shared and soon it was almost the end of the session which meant it was lunch time and staff had to prepare the food, once again I helped with the easy role of just having to get out some extra tables.

After lunch and before the next training session was due to begin the coach came over to me and the outgoing performance analyst and informed us that they would be practising gameplay situations that afternoon. The analyst commented how this would give me an opportunity to gain some experience live coding using the tagging template that he had already developed, which I thought would be a good idea. I had some previous of tagging performances as part of my undergraduate studies, but I hadn't tried to do it live while a team was playing before. Therefore, I helped him to set up the camera in an appropriate place to be able to film and tag simultaneously (previously the camera had been placed at the top of a seating block and the record button was pressed at the start of the session and then left until it finished). It was agreed that I would only have to tag on the computer whilst Rich would move and operate the camera for me but going forwards it would be something that I would have to manage on my own.



I felt that my biggest challenge would be being aware of what was happening in the game to correctly tag everything, but thankfully I had help stood just next to me to tell me what was happening if I was struggling. The game started, and I hadn't realised quite how fast paced it was, the players had suddenly increased their intensity from the previous training sessions I had witnessed. All the buttons I had to press suddenly became a lot harder than I had imagined, I had much less time than I thought. I was missing most of the buttons, I wasn't entirely sure where each one was, and I pressed it probably 5 seconds later than I should have been doing. I was getting more and more stressed as I fell further behind and felt like I was losing control, I was lucky it was only a training session. I couldn't cope with watching what was happening on the court as well as finding and pressing the appropriate buttons on the computer. Eventually there was a break in play which I was very thankfully for. I suddenly realised that I would need to practice and improve quickly otherwise the coaches and players would not be happy with the standard of my work. I was missing too much and getting things wrong. It didn't get much better as the session went on, and this was without having to control the video camera as well. Finally, the coach told the players to cool down and I was put out of my misery.

Once the players had cooled down the coaches were called over to the group and in turn they called all members of staff over to join them too. The coach asked me and Rich to stand in the middle of the circle and lead the shout as the incoming and outgoing members of staff; I didn't know what a shout was and suddenly felt very self-conscious and nervous in front of people that I hadn't got to know yet. It was explained that all I had to do was shout 1, 2, 3... and then everybody would join in and shout GB together. I could feel everybody watching me. Why was I feeling nervous about counting out loud to 3? That wasn't a hard task. I knew that here wasn't any way of escaping the situation, so I took a deep breath, looked at Rich and nodded to show that I was ready to start. Thankfully after the '3' everybody joined in and shouted GB together, I hadn't been comfortable in front of everyone, but hopefully they hadn't noticed that, and I'd proved myself to them. After the shout, the coach welcomed me to the team and thanked Rich for all his work and wished him well for the future.

The players were packing away their equipment and leaving, so Rich and I went to sort out the camera and other performance analysis equipment. Once it had all been explained and sorted, I said my goodbyes to everyone and wished them a happy Christmas and commented that I would see them in the New Year for the training camp in January. Rich and I then both carried the equipment out to my car and Rich helped me pack it all into the boot and said that if I ever needed any help that I could always message him, and he would try to help me. I thanked him for all his help over the past two days and the offer of assistance moving forwards too. I then got my car ready to travel back home after a long, tiring two days through rush hour traffic on a Friday afternoon. As I drove home I reflected on the past couple of days and I certainly felt like I would have to improve my tagging skills for when matches were being played live. I hoped that would just come with practice and as I learnt more about the game and the rules and also the layout of the tagging template that I would be using. I certainly wasn't as concerned as I had been driving down yesterday morning before I knew anybody; I think I had made it through both days without embarrassing myself or making myself look stupid. Yes, in future there might be situations that could be difficult for me, but everyone had seemed very welcoming and understanding so I felt like I'd be able to be honest with them and ask for help as and when I needed it without being judged.

## Appendix C – Ethical approval



### Department of Exercise and Sport Science

#### Application for Expedited Ethical Approval for a Study Involving Human Volunteers (Form E1).



For use by Reviewers only	
Reviewed by	Recommendation
Required Action:	

Section I: Project Details
<p>1 The Use of Performance Analysis in Elite Sport: An Ethnography of Practice</p> <p>Project start date : 01/05/2015 Project end date : 30/04/2018</p>
<p>Brief description of research project activities:</p> <p>The aim of this project is to explore the relationship between the coach, athlete, and performance analyst to discover how these individuals work together prior to, during, and after video-based performance feedback sessions. Within a case study methodology, semi-structured interviews and observations with a coach, analyst, and athlete from a single sport will be used to provide an insight into the interactions that occur surrounding video-based feedback sessions in elite sport. The observations will explore <i>how</i> the coach, analyst, and athlete interact with each other (Research Question 1). These interactions will then be explored utilising reflexive interviews to explore, <i>what</i> meaning the coach, analyst, and athlete attach to these interactions (Research Question 2). <i>Why</i> the coach, analyst, and athlete interpret their interactions in this particular way (Research Question 3) and <i>how</i> these social exchanges are structured and negotiated by the coach, analyst, and athlete to influence the effectiveness of the video-feedback sessions (Research Question 4).</p> <p>The three participants will be suggested by the Industry Advisor (Stafford Murray) who is the Head of Performance Analysis at the English Institute of Sport (EIS) in Manchester. All participants will be over 18 years old, and will have provided informed consent before data collection will commence. Data collection will be conducted in a naturalistic environment at the EIS training centre in Manchester, investigating Cycling, Taekwondo, Gymnastics or Judo. Therefore, the participants will not be asked to do anything that they would otherwise not be doing, apart from discussing the meaning that they attach to the interactions from the video-based feedback sessions within their individual interview. The observations will occur over three to six video-based feedback sessions, with the researcher noting any areas of discussions to explore within the follow-up interview (field notes). Particular attention will be given to those areas that elicited coach-athlete dialogue, for example, instances where the coach and athlete engaged in two-way conversation. The interview could range from 60 to 90 minutes and will be audio-recorded, transcribed and then analysed. These recordings will not be made available to any parties and will be stored on a password-protected computer that only the principle investigator (Ian Britton) will have access to.</p>

**Section II: Applicant Details**

3	Principal Investigator	Mr Ian Britton
4	Email Address	11050418@stu.mmu.ac.uk

**Section III: Prior Approval**

5	Is the study part of a staff-led project that has already received ethical approval? If yes, provide the application number here	<b>No</b>
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**Section IV: Ethical Approval Checklist**

6	Will the study involve NHS patients or NHS employed staff ? (If <b>YES</b> , you will also have to gain IRAS approval prior to Departmental consideration of the application). Go to <a href="https://www.myresearchproject.org.uk/signin.aspx">https://www.myresearchproject.org.uk/signin.aspx</a> for details of this process.	<b>No</b>
7	Does the study involve strenuous exercise testing of participants over 40 years of age (Such testing would involve near maximal or maximal exertion on the part of the participant)?	<b>No</b>
8	Will the study require the co-operation of a 'gatekeeper' for initial access to the groups or individuals to be recruited (e.g., students at school, members of a sport team)?	<b>Yes</b>
9	Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time (e.g., covert observation)?	<b>No</b>
10	Will the study involve asking sensitive questions (e.g., about drug use)?	<b>No</b>
11	Will the study involve any invasive procedures (other than venous or capillary blood samples), exposure to radiation or either electrical or magnetic stimulation?	<b>No</b>
12	Is physical pain or more than mild physical discomfort likely to result from the study?	<b>No</b>
13	Could the study induce psychological stress beyond those voluntarily encountered in the participant's normal life?	<b>No</b>
14	Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing (beyond normal test-retest)?	<b>No</b>
15	Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?	<b>No</b>
16	Does the environment in which the study takes place expose the investigator to potential risk or harm?	<b>No</b>
17	Will there be any substances (other than water) be administered during the study?	<b>No</b>
18	Do you have concerns over the mobility or learning abilities of your participants?	<b>No</b>
19	Are you storing any biological samples covered by the Human Tissue Act ?	<b>No</b>
20	Have you read the University's Standard Operating Protocols/Guidelines relating to the Human Tissue Act ?	<b>No</b>
21	Have you received HTA training?	<b>No</b>
	<b>If you have answered 'YES' to Question 19 and 'NO' to either Questions 20 or 21, please complete the following online training link: <a href="http://www.rsclearn.mrc.ac.uk">http://www.rsclearn.mrc.ac.uk</a>. When completed, please send your completed form to the Faculty HTA advisor.</b>	
22	Does the study involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent (e.g., Children under 18 years of age). <b>ONLY IF YOU HAVE SELECTED 'YES' TO THIS QUESTION</b> , complete the following four supplementary questions.	<b>No</b>
i	Will the data be directly supervised by an appropriately qualified individual (e.g., class teacher or coach)? If 'YES', provide the person's details as follows : <b>Name:</b> _____ <b>Phone No:</b> _____	

ii	Will the study only use previously validated and published methods / tools (e.g., validated questionnaires, observations, interview guides, skills tests etc.)?	
iii	Have you completed an enhanced CRB check?	
iv	Will the study only require activities that would be considered part of the participant's normal educational or sporting experience (e.g., a PE lesson or coaching session)?	

**If you have answered 'YES' to any of the questions numbered 6-18 or question 22 and 'NO' to any of the supplementary items to question 22 (i-iv), explain how you intend to reduce any potential risks or harm to those involved in the study (maximum of 200 words).**

The project requires a gatekeeper to gain access to the individuals involved in the research. If the gatekeeper changes their mind and cannot allow access to the individuals, then a different organisation would be approached to see if work could be done with individuals that work for them instead. The gatekeeper for this project is Stafford Murray (Head of Performance Analysis at the English Institute of Sport) – contact detail [stafford.murray@eis2win.co.uk](mailto:stafford.murray@eis2win.co.uk) Stafford Murray has now been added to the supervisory team as an industry advisor.

**Providing sufficient detail at this stage could permit approval under the Exercise and Sport Science Ethics Committee's expedited procedures. However, the committee retains the right to refer the application to the full Exercise and Sports Science (ESS) ethics committee. In such cases, investigators should be aware that this could delay consideration of the application. Information regarding meeting dates for the ESS ethics committee can be obtained from Mrs Stephanie Holland ([s.a.holland@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:s.a.holland@mmu.ac.uk)).**

## Appendix D – Informed consent form



### Department of Exercise and Sport Science

#### Informed Consent for Involvement in Interviews



**(Both the investigator and participant should retain a copy of this form)**

Name of Participant:

Supervisor/Principal Investigator: Mr Ian Britton

Project Title: The Use of Performance Analysis in Elite Sport: An Ethnography of Practice

Ethics Committee Approval Number: 11.12.14(i)

#### Participant Statement

I have read the participant information sheet for this study and understand what is involved in taking part. Any questions I have about the study, or my participation in it, have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I do not have to take part and that I may decide to withdraw from the study at any point without giving a reason. Any concerns I have raised regarding this study have been answered and I understand that any further concerns that arise during the time of the study will be addressed by the investigator. I therefore agree to participate in the study.

I agree to allow the interview to be recorded.

YES ☐ NO ☐

I agree to allow direct quotations to be used.

YES ☐ NO ☐

I wish my identity to remain anonymous.

YES ☐ NO ☐

Signed (Participant)

Date

Signed (Investigator)

Date

#### Parental or guardian consent for research involving children.

I confirm that the details of this study have been fully explained and described in writing to (insert name) and have been understood by him/her and I therefore consent to his/her participation in this study.

Signed :

Date :

Please provide a contact number in case we need to get in touch with you.

Telephone :

This version of the form should be used from  
September 2013 onwards.

## Appendix E – Risk assessment

Key: 5\*5 scale for both probability and impact of very low to very high.

Risk	Probability 1 low 4 High	Impact 1 low 4 High	RAG (P x S)	Mitigation
<b>Staffing</b>				
The research student leaves MMU	1	4	4	The student is committed to seeing this project through to the end and has had input throughout the process to ensure the subject is one that they are interested in.
Lose a member of supervisory team	1	3	3	There is sufficient experience from all members of the supervisory team that the project could continue and a replacement supervisor found to replace the lost member.
Conflict within the project	1	3	3	The engagement of supervisors at the beginning of the project and agreement of the initial project idea and direction, combined with supervisory meetings to discuss project updates should ensure that there is a consensus.

<b>Data Collection</b>				
Fail to record interviews	1	3	3	All equipment will be tested in advance with a spare set also taken to interviews. As a back-up there will be some scribing of major themes during data collection.
Data security	1	4	4	The collected data will be stored on a password protected laptop and backed up on a password protected hard drive.
Location	1	2	2	The emergency procedures for the location shall be identified prior to data collection commencing. A suitable quiet location will be found to record an interview without being disturbed and the quality of the recording affected by background noise.

Data Analysis				
Unable to secure participants for the interviews and observations	2	4	8	The researcher will discuss alternative options with supervisors and use their connections to try to find participants that are willing to be observed and take part in an interview.
A participant withdraws from the study	2	4	8	The data relating to the participant that withdrew will be removed from the project. The analysis will continue within the same context, but it will then focus upon the two individuals remaining in the investigation
Conflict in the relationship between coach-athlete-analyst	2	4	8	A debrief with all the individuals involved would occur to try and resolve the conflict. Would also request permission to still use the data within the study and to continue collecting more data
Problems with transcription of interviews	2	4	8	A sound check will be completed at the start of the interviews to ensure that the recording is clear. The supervisors have experience with transcribing interviews and could provide advice and guidance for the student to make the process as easy as possible.